

GFAR

Global Forum for Agricultural Research and  
Innovation

***An independent forward-looking  
learning review***

*Final draft report*

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## Abstract

The review has shown that GFAR, as a global networking organization, is doing what it is supposed to do: catalyzing transformative change in diverse corners of the global Agri-Food Research and Innovation System. A review of 72 illustrative examples of outcomes from GFAR actions showed a 32% success rate in terms of enabling joint action and 21% in terms of institutional change. GFAR therefore has a critical contribution to make towards achieving the goals of the UN 2030 Agenda. However, while recent governance reform has contributed to stronger and more diverse stakeholder representation, the review also found that over the past years, GFAR's outcomes were spread too thinly; are often not recognized as such and GFAR has not been able to adequately follow up on many initiatives from its partners. As a result, GFAR has lost profile and direction, reducing the effectiveness of its actions. At the same time, GFAR adopted a new Charter, has strengthened the representation of multiple stakeholders in its governance; establishing a Steering Committee in which a wide range of research and innovation stakeholders is represented, including farmers, women and youth, at different levels. The review confirmed that GFAR's choice to focus on 'collective actions' as the modus operandi for its partners to catalyze transformative change provides an opportunity to sharpen its profile and professionalize its work streams. By developing a professional learning culture, GFAR may be expected to build on its strengths and do even better.

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## Executive Summary

### Introduction

This report provides an independent, forward-looking learning review of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation, GFAR, its main activities, outcomes and contributions to strengthening pro-poor Agro-Food research and innovation for development (AR4D) systems at global, regional and national levels. The review takes place at the moment when GFAR has completed a process of transition and initiates the implementation of its new Charter (2016), a pivot point in GFAR history. The review accounts for institutional changes made, while keeping an open eye for continuity in its main areas of work. Consequently, the report illustrates both progress on outcomes and impact, and suggests an outline for wider, participatory multi-stakeholder learning trajectories aimed at further improving the platforms' relevance, effectiveness and impact as a unique global forum for networking agri-food research and innovation for development.

The review sought to answer the following general questions:

1. *How effective and relevant are GFAR collective actions to the transformation of national, regional and global Agri-Food Research and Innovation Systems for development?*
2. *How can the effectiveness of GFAR collective actions be further improved?*

The team made use of available *documentation*; did 6 *case studies* of specific collective actions and a total of 81 semi-structured interviews. Through a *Sprockler survey*<sup>1</sup> complementary information was collected from 40 GFAR partners. From the documentation, interviews and survey the team harvested and crosschecked 72 *GFAR-related outcomes* and assessed their strength. The evidence collected enables the team to review the variety and strength of GFAR-related outcomes in terms of contributing to transformative change in Agri-Food Research and Innovation Systems. It also provides detailed insight into how GFAR performance is jointly constructed and appreciated by its partners and the challenges ahead. However, to determine the long-term impact of GFAR on system transformation is beyond the scope of this brief assessment.

### GFAR and the UN Agenda 2030

The UN Agenda 2030 calls for transformation, to translate research into innovation and impact through effective multi-stakeholder partnerships requiring a profound change in the food and agriculture sector – a transformative change. Over the past decade, in developing countries numerous multi-stakeholder research and innovation partnerships have taken shape that aim, besides producing excellent research results, to actively involve other stakeholders in making sure these results will eventually match the stakeholders' interests and the context in which they can be applied to scale. Each of these partnerships in fact represents an emergent local research and innovation system set to contribute to transforming the Agri-Food and Nutrition System as a whole.

GFAR as '*the open and inclusive multi-stakeholder mechanism for catalyzing these changes*' (GCARD Roadmap, p. 14) has actively contributed to the emergence of such

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sprockler.com/>

partnerships. It connects a wide range of constituencies: research organizations, extension and rural advisory services, education organizations, civil society organizations, private sector, women's, youth' and farmers' organizations, government institutions, consumer organizations and G20/investors/funding schemes active in agriculture and rural development. Its governance includes representatives of international institutions (FAO, CGIAR, IFAD, AIRCA), Regional Fora of National Research Organizations (AARINENA, APAARI, CACAARI, EFARD, FARA, & FORAGRO) and of international networks and grassroots organizations representing other key stakeholders: International farmer's organizations, donor agencies (incl. GDPRD network), NGO/CSO, private sector, education, advisory services, women & youth. The precisions regarding GFAR's vision, mandate, role and approach were consolidated in a new Charter in 2016.

### **GFAR contributes to transforming Agri-Food Research and Innovation Systems for development**

The review finds GFAR catalysed a variety of collective actions that produced a wide range of outcomes that effectively contribute to rendering Agri-food Research and Innovation Systems<sup>2</sup> more inclusive and more effective. Outcomes were identified in each of the GFAR key outcome areas, agreed during GCARD 1 as the most promising for accelerating transformative change.

Over the years, GFAR and its partners have worked to include Farmers Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, Regional Agricultural Research Forums, Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services, International Public Sector Research Organizations, Higher Education, Private Sector, International Agencies, Advanced Research and recently, Consumers in multi-stakeholder initiatives, with particular attention to smallholder farmers, women and youth, and their organizations, as partners and provided them with opportunities for networking, advocacy and cooperation. Where possible it actively supported the self-organization and or institutionalisation of these constituencies (i.e. Foresight, GFRAS, YPARD, GAP, Letters of Agreement with Regional Forums). As a result, GFAR and its partners have clearly contributed to Agri-food Research and Innovation Systems becoming more inclusive; not only at the global and regional level, but also in a number of countries as a result of specific collective actions<sup>3</sup> or, where IFAD's enhanced investment portfolio was implemented. Yet, as one of the interviewees remarked, 'this is only the beginning'. To achieve a truly global articulation of multi-stakeholder networks and dialogues, at various levels the representation and voice of stakeholder groups, or constituencies, needs to be further strengthened and articulated; in particular small-holder farmers, women and youth, and the private sector.

Numerous examples of joint initiatives by GFAR and its partners were identified, ranging from co-organizing global conferences and meetings to organizing multi-stakeholder innovation platforms and innovation support funds at country level; from strengthening the voice of hitherto unheard stakeholders to building multi-stakeholder partnerships; from articles and books to developing an agricultural research and innovation agenda, and from advocating changes in the institutional policies to developing and proposing

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<sup>2</sup> The review team takes an Agri-Food Research and Innovation System (ARIS) to represent a system that enables relevant stakeholders to work together to identify, explore, research, develop, pilot and bring to scale ideas, practices and/or technologies that contribute to transforming Agri-Food and Nutrition Systems.

<sup>3</sup> I.e. Country Platforms, Innovation Platforms, Local Innovation Support Funds, Community foresight.

methodologies suitable to trigger institutional change. The review shows that 90% of these initiatives achieved active multi-stakeholder engagement, 74% produced concrete takeaways participants considered applying to their work or to their organization, 32% enabled joint actions, while 21% led to institutional changes (Table 1). Also, further scrutiny of the outcomes shows that GFAR-related outcomes, instead of focusing solely on technological innovation, catalyse social, financial, economical, and institutional and policy innovations, that help create enabling conditions for bringing technological innovation to scale. This confirms GFAR's contribution to transformative change and the complementarity and added value of GFAR collective actions with regard to mainstream AR4D activities.

**Table 1: GFAR outcome performance assessment<sup>4</sup>**

GFAR key outcome areas	Total # of outcomes reviewed	Assessment of outcome performance level				
		Level 1: Opportunity created/seized	Level 2: Engagement achieved	Level 3: Take-aways produced	Level 4: Joint action enabled	Level 5: Institutional change induced
1 Stakeholder empowerment	19	19	19	16	6	2
2 Partnerships for impact	11	11	10	8	3	2
3 Transformative investments	3	3	3	3	2	2
4 New capacity initiatives	12	12	9	8	3	1
5 Research and knowledge embedded	10	10	10	8	6	5
6 Strategic coherence/stakeholder involvement	17	17	14	10	3	3
Total reviewed	72	72	65	53	23	15
	100%	100%	90%	74%	32%	21%

### **GFAR-related contributions are relevant in the context of change in Agricultural Research and Innovation Systems**

GFAR-related outcomes are generated through collective actions undertaken by GFAR partners, with direct or indirect support from GFAR or, in some cases, just inspired by active participation in a meeting, workshop or conference GFAR (co-) organised. GFAR's catalysing role means that local, national, regional and/or global actors identify issues relevant to their own context and practice and design collective actions to address them. Where this design and its implementation adheres to the GFAR process quality requirements, such collective actions are demand-driven, development- and action-oriented and characterized by equal representation of all relevant stakeholders and a level playing field for all. However, GFAR's contribution is not only creating conditions for multi-stakeholder partnerships to emerge. It also helps create enabling conditions for bringing technological innovation to scale and to render Agri-Food and Nutrition Systems more inclusive and more sustainable. This way GFAR provides a much-needed global complement to the many efforts being made in the world today that focus on driving technological innovation. This message the review team received over and over again from the large majority of GFAR partners who insist, if GFAR wouldn't exist they would create it.

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from Kirkpatrick's Model of Program Evaluation - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald\\_Kirkpatrick](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald_Kirkpatrick)

Within the context of global, regional and national Agri-Food Research and Innovation Systems that face on the one hand, huge challenges to respond to the needs of rural communities, smallholder farmers, women, youth, and SMEs in particular, and on the other, stiff limitations with regard to scaling up innovation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, GFAR's two-fold contributions acquire extreme relevance.

### **GFAR strategy, management and organization**

Many respondents expressed GFAR appears to be spreading its limited resources too thinly; as a result, too many initiatives by its partners do not receive the follow up and support required. It lacks focus. Besides, GFAR is too dependent on short-term, project-oriented funding to effectively work towards achieving its long-term mission. Yet GFAR's strategy and theory of change lack specificity and need to be developed to support focus as well as operational decision-making. This requires a much sharper definition of instruments to be used, expected outcomes and impact on Agri-food Research and Innovation Systems; and a monitoring system that collects key information on actions and results on a regular basis, for reporting, communication and learning purposes.

As do most partners, this review considers the new Charter, the Steering Committee with broad multi-stakeholder representation from global, regional and local levels and, the choice of collective actions as *modus operandi* for GFAR to be very promising. Yet in order to fully implement its new Charter, and realize the potential of its collective actions, GFAR needs to realize it enters further into uncharted territory. Rather than a fixed mind set, this requires developing, with its partners, a professional learning culture: defining practical learning trajectories and the systematic use of innovative, creative and non-conventional ways of documenting, sharing and learning.

Facilitating agencies and strategic partners play dominant roles in GFAR, as is the CGIAR. For GFAR to live up to its potential, they need to pledge long-term support to GFAR's mission and operations. They need to provide GFAR with an adequate, flexible work force and operating space so it can manage its programmes and support its partners to effect. And they need to be aware of two distinct lines of financial support required. First, financial support for GFAR's basic platform functions, its governance, catalysing role, communications and multi-stakeholder networking and matchmaking, supporting and capitalising on collective actions, and where necessary, bolstering particular GFAR constituencies. Second, ways will have to be found to secure complementary international financing and context-specific technical support to collective actions by GFAR partners, so these can be scaled, linked and shared internationally.

### **The review therefore makes the following recommendations:**

1. *Continue to empower GFAR's constituencies*, in particular smallholder farmers, women and youth: provide tailor-made support, ensure active participation and help reduce existing asymmetries between constituencies.
2. *Improve the capitalization of, and learning from results of GFAR collective actions*: organize systematic learning from collective action; decentralized knowledge hubs in key focus areas; provide tailor-made support to uptake of lessons learned at the regional and national level.

3. *Develop a more explicit GFAR strategy with a focus recognizable to all:* Align GFAR's strategy and profile to relevant SDG's; concentrate on GFAR's role as an enabler, providing its members with opportunities to dialogue, advocate and realize collective actions; review and narrow down key focus areas; specify GFAR's theory of change, in particular regarding intended outcomes and impact; define indicators and methods for harvesting results.
4. *Make better use of your partners:* Strengthen GFAR's presence in the regions; decentralize activities where possible; support partners in mobilizing resources; engage partners more actively into advocacy at the global level; fully implement GFAR's new charter; consider translating key documents in different languages.
5. *Improve operational management:* Appoint an operations manager; consider innovation ways of organizing; provide reasonable job security and flexible working environment; organize and enable on-the-job learning; develop a transparent modus operandi for identifying and supporting GFAR collective actions; ensure feed-back and follow-up to partners' initiatives; develop a monitoring framework and system to harvest outcomes and potential for impact; improve external communication.
6. *Develop a professional learning culture:* Design and implement three joint, participatory learning trajectories<sup>5</sup>:
  - A. *GFAR Strategy, Focus and Visualization:* to specify GFAR's operational strategy, theory of change, design a monitoring, outcome harvesting and sharing and reporting system – cf. recommendations 3 and 5
  - B. *Capitalize on GFAR Collective Actions:* organize joint stocktaking exercises, one decentralized (methodological) knowledge hub per outcome area – cf. recommendations 2 and 4
  - C. *Professionalize:* organize Global Learning Lab to build a widespread professional understanding of what 'catalyzing transformation in Agri-Food Research and Innovation Systems for development' means and how it can be most effective – cf. cutting across all recommendations.
7. *Inform and engage facilitating agencies and strategic partners on what it brings and what it takes 'to catalyze transformative change in Agri-Food Research and Innovation Systems':* Agree on joint ambitions with regard to transformative change in Agri-Food Research and Innovation systems in line with the UN 2030 Agenda; agree on longer term full-time staff equivalents, financial and in-kind support required for GFAR core activities; create opportunities for GFAR-related collective actions to attract financial support for international networking and communication activities directly from donors, complementing local and regional resources and GFAR seed money.

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<sup>5</sup> A joint learning trajectory is understood as a *participatory process in which a range of GFAR partners walks a purposeful path of joint inquiry, learning and design towards enabling GFAR to become more effective in what they do*. Aim, lines of inquiry, learning and design, outputs and expected outcomes for each learning trajectory have been laid out in chapter 7 of the report.



## 1. Introduction

This Interim Report of the independent, forward-looking learning review provides an outsiders' view of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation, GFAR, its main activities, outcomes and contributions to strengthening pro-poor Agro-Food research and innovation for development systems at global, regional and national levels. It aims to suggest basic elements in order to support an agenda for continued learning by GFAR members and officials on how to further improve the platforms' relevance, effectiveness and impact as a global forum for networking research and innovation for agricultural development.

The review takes place at the moment when GFAR has completed a process of transition and initiates the implementation of its new Charter (2016), a pivot point in GFAR history. The review takes account of institutional changes made, while keeping an open eye for continuity in its main areas of work. Consequently, this Interim Report can illustrate both progress on outcomes and impact, and look forward to future needs and developments. The final report will also include a proposed outline and an agenda for a wider, participatory multi-stakeholder review and learning process that is impossible within the timeframe set for this review (3 months).

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The team was contracted by IFAD and has done its work during the period July-October 2017

## 2. GFAR in context

### 2.1. The UN 2030 Agenda: A global call for transforming Agri-Food and Nutrition Systems

The global partnership for development which underpins the UN 2030 Agenda calls for transforming our world by 2030 into ‘a world free of poverty, hunger, disease and want. A world, for example, of safe and nutritious food; of affordable drinking water; of universal access to basic education; of physical, mental and social well-being (...)’.<sup>6</sup> Goal 2 specifies targets to ‘End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture’. Besides, it pledges to ‘Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms’ (from target 17.6) and to ‘Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries’ (Target 17.16) and to ‘Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships’ (Target 17.17).

As Cooke (2017) shows, the UN call for transformation has since been operationalized for agricultural research and innovation by numerous organizations, such as the UN Rome-based Agencies (FAO, IFAD, WFP), Multilateral Development Banks (World Bank, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank), multilateral donor groups (G20, G7 and G8, the European Commission, the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development and the OECD), international private sector and foundations (Global Harvest Initiative, Sustainable Agriculture Platform, Syngenta foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation), bilateral donors (i.e. US, Germany, UK, France, Sweden, Switzerland, Netherlands, Canada, Australia) and by regional resource groups and Middle-Income Countries (Europe’s EIARD and EFARD, CABI, AGRA, FARA (Africa), CAAS (China), EMBRAPA (Brazil), ICAR (India), ARC (South Africa)). A common thread in their statements is the demand to translate research into innovation and impact through effective multi-stakeholder partnerships, requiring a profound change in the food and agriculture sector – transformational innovation (Cooke, 2017, p. 48).

In fact, the need for multi-stakeholder collaboration to achieve impact from agricultural innovation has been a common thread in domestic agricultural development policies of many industrialized and emerging economies and regions that have successfully developed their agricultural sector as a motor of economic growth. The US Land Grant system is the classical example. The Dutch ‘Growth Diamond’ is another one.<sup>7</sup> In much of Europe’s food and agriculture research multi-stakeholder partnerships are mainstreamed, also in its research programs with partners in developing countries. Also the World Bank, with its support of the creation of national innovation systems, aims at

<sup>6</sup> UN Secretary General’s Report on the SDGs, Article 15

<sup>7</sup> Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch Diamond Approach, PPP Expertise Centre: [www.government.nl/ppp](http://www.government.nl/ppp)

stimulating and empowering effective multi-stakeholder partnerships for technological innovation. FARA's integrated agriculture research for development (IAR4D) approach in Africa is another case in point<sup>8</sup>.

As a result, certainly over the past decade, in developing countries numerous multi-stakeholder research and innovation partnerships have taken shape that aim, besides producing excellent research results, to actively involve other stakeholders in making sure these results will eventually match the stakeholders' interests and the context in which they can be applied to scale. Each of these partnerships in fact represents an emergent local research and innovation system that may contribute to transforming the Agri-Food and Nutrition System as a whole.

## 2.2. GFAR - Global networking to transform AR4D Systems

### **BOX 1 Milestones and actions leading to the establishment of GFAR**

An International Consultation entitled "Towards a NARS Vision of International Agricultural Research" was convened by IFAD in Rome, December 1994, within the framework of the process of renewal of the CGIAR System. Some 80 NARS leaders came together and produced a Declaration with concrete actions to strengthen NARS-CGIAR partnership. The Lucerne Ministerial-Level Meeting, which followed in February 1995, urged the CGIAR "to accelerate the process of systematizing participation by NARS of developing countries in setting and implementing the Consultative Group's agenda".

A follow-up meeting to "develop an action plan to strengthen NARS-CGIAR partnership" was held on May 21, 1995 in Nairobi to discuss ideas for the formulation of an Outline Action Plan (OAP) adopted at the October 1995 CGIAR International Centers' Week. The Plan called for establishing or convening regional fora of NARS leaders. These meetings ensured that the broader NARS community had an opportunity to discuss issues of importance for developing stronger NARS-CGIAR partnerships. The outcome of these meetings led to the rejuvenation of regional organizations of NARS (AARINENA and APAARI) and the establishment of new regional fora (FARA to cover Africa, and FORAGRO).

Several preparatory meetings at IFAD HQ in Rome between May- September 1996 enabled selected NARS leaders from four (4) regions to share ideas on strengthening the CGIAR's partnership with NARS, building on the outcome of the NARS-led consultative process since the Rome NARS Consultation (1994) and on the outputs of the regional fora meetings held between December 1995 and October 1996. A common understanding was reached on an agenda for a Global NARS meeting to be held during the CGIAR ICW96. At the end of this meeting the Global Forum on Agricultural Research was born – with the full engagement of NARS leaders from Africa, West Asia and North Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America

At its establishment in 1996 GFAR was charged with strengthening the voice of national research systems in setting and implementing the CGIAR international research agenda (Box 1, and Cooke, 2017, p. 48). One principal instrument to achieve greater alignment and collaboration was the GFAR Triennial Conference (Dresden, 2000; Dakar, 2003; New Delhi, 2006). A Memorandum of Agreement between IFAD and FAO established the GFAR Secretariat formally in 2003. Their joint action recognized the importance of mobilising not just research, but all stakeholders in agricultural innovation and research for development (AR4D). Indeed, since its reform also the CGIAR sought partnerships with a broader group of development partners, i.e. those involved in Agricultural

<sup>8</sup> A.A. Adekunle et al. (2012) *Agricultural Innovation in sub-Saharan Africa* FARA, Accra, Ghana

Research for Development (AR4D): “The CGIAR Consortium’s contribution to agricultural development through research and knowledge management must be integrated with the wider development goals and activities of other actors, notably countries, international and regional development organizations, multilateral organizations, advanced research institutes (ARIs), the private sector and organizations such as AGRA”. (AGM 2008, cited in Cooke, 2017, p.48).

**Box 2: Excerpts from the 1998 GFAR Charter, revised 2006**

- GFAR strives to develop a global agricultural research system by drawing on the complementary strengths of all stakeholders involved (complementarity).
- The NARS of all countries, both developed and developing, along with their regional and sub-regional fora are the cornerstones of the global agricultural research system that GFAR aims to create for effective and mutually beneficial partnership. Involvement of all stakeholders (partnership)
- GFAR supports programs and projects that aim specifically to add value to what each stakeholder is able to do on its own (additionality).
- Programs and projects are planned and managed at the lowest level at which they can be effectively executed (subsidiarity).

As a result, since its inception GFAR has advocated and fostered the participation of other stakeholders besides researchers in partnerships for research and innovation for development. Presently, GFAR’s mandate has formally broadened from strengthening the global agricultural *research* system to strengthening and transforming the global *Agricultural Research and Innovation for Development (AR4D)* system globally. This coincided with the CGIAR Reform of 2008-2009, which also aimed to more firmly engage and align CGIAR research with other global, regional and national research and innovation stakeholders in developing countries. Hence, the GFAR Triennial Conferences and CGIAR Annual General Meetings were combined and reframed as GCARDs – Global Conferences on Agricultural Research for Development, co-organized by GFAR, in collaboration with CGIAR and national partners, and were designed to serve this broader reflection, integration and alignment.

A principal outcome of GCARD 1, co-organized in 2010 by GFAR with the CGIAR and Agropolis International in Montpellier, was the **GCARD Roadmap**<sup>9</sup> whose aim is:

- ‘...to transform AR4D globally, from its current fragmented status to more coherent and cohesive systems for greater impact’ (GCARD Road Map, p.17).
- It puts the needs and aims of resource-poor farmers and consumers at the center of the AR4D System and which proposes a series of transformative measures required to enhance the contribution of agricultural research and innovation towards development outcomes.
- It identifies the stakeholders that need to be mobilized at the national, regional and international levels, as they are the owners of the process of transforming the generation and use of agricultural knowledge and technologies for development.
- And it turns upside down the approach to innovation from a linear, technological offering-based approach towards a comprehensive, demand-driven approach

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.fao.org/docs/eims/upload//290017/The\\_GCARD\\_Road\\_Map\\_finalized.pdf](http://www.fao.org/docs/eims/upload//290017/The_GCARD_Road_Map_finalized.pdf)

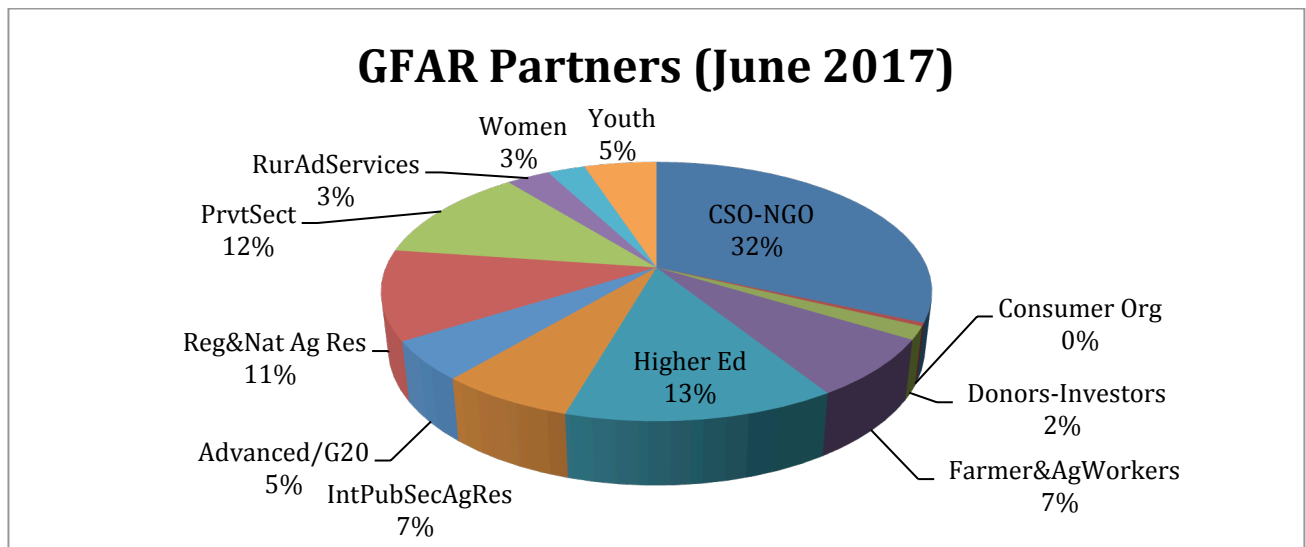
seeking to deliver the outcomes desired by and for the poor through optimizing the role of knowledge generation, access and use in leading to these.

### **Box 3: Excerpts from the New 2016 GFAR Charter**

- GFAR strives to develop and strengthen the global agri-food research and innovation system by drawing on the value of the diversity and complementary strengths of all stakeholders involved (**complementarity**). GFAR links research and innovation, from any source, with the users of their products. Through actions or advocacy GFAR strengthens and transforms Agri-Food Research and Innovation Systems towards shared demand-driven development aims and which add value through their joint actions.
- GFAR is an open and inclusive forum, in which partnership is voluntary, and which engages any Partners who wish to align with GFAR's vision and mission. GFAR operates by consensus and commitment of Partners themselves (**volunteerism**). The Global Forum's Partners agree to commit and generate resources together to be able to implement collective actions.
- **Collective action** is the overarching principle guiding GFAR's work. A GFAR Collective Action is a multi-stakeholder programme of work at national, regional and international level, initiated by three or more partners and prioritized by the Global Forum, always including producers and with a particular focus on women and youth.
- **Planning and management** of GFAR Collective Actions should take place at the most appropriate level at which they can be effectively and efficiently implemented. The GFAR implementing Partners may include local, national, regional or global organizations, depending on which level is most appropriate to implementing the action.
- The Global Forum's Collective Actions and their **outcomes must be publicly recognized as contributing to the objectives** of the Global Forum and the GCARD Road Map. Progress must be reported and shared with other partners through the Forum.
- GFAR provides a **framework for holding researchers and service providers accountable** to addressing needs, particularly of resource-poor smallholder farmers and poor rural communities.

**It also formally redefined the role of GFAR as the open and inclusive multi-stakeholder mechanism for catalyzing these changes** (GCARD Roadmap, p. 14). As an input to the conference, moreover GFAR and ILAC (2010) convened a group of global experts and local stakeholders to increase understanding of how to connect research with development through partnerships, defining different types of AR4D partnerships as well as principles of effective partnerships (Cooke, p. 49).

As of 2017, GFAR has a wide range of **constituencies**: research organizations, extension and rural advisory services, education organizations, civil society organizations, private sector, women's, youth' and farmers' organizations, government institutions, consumer organizations and G20/investors/funding schemes active in agriculture and rural development. Its governance includes representatives of international institutions (FAO, CGIAR, IFAD, AIRCA), Regional Fora of national research organizations (AARINENA, APAARI, CACAARI, EFARD, FARA, & FORAGRO) and of international networks and grassroots organizations representing other key stakeholders: International farmer's organizations, donor organizations (GDPRD network), NGO/CSO, private sector, education, advisory services women & youth. The changes in GFAR's vision, mandate, role and approach were eventually incorporated in a new Charter in 2016. Figure 1 below presents an overview of all organizations that signed up as members of GFAR in support of its new Charter.



**Figure 1: Up to June 2017 close to five hundred organizations and networks signed up as partners in GFAR under its new Charter and their distribution over various constituencies.** Source: GFAR Secretariat/Sprockler

final draft

### 3. Review approach and methodology

The review of a complex phenomenon like GFAR and its global networking activities needs to be sharply focused. To create a comprehensive picture of the entire global Agri-Food Research and Innovation System is beyond our means. To make a full inventory of all outcomes GFAR may have contributed to over the years is equally impossible. Yet gaining an understanding of GFAR's role in the overall dynamics is not. For this we need an analytical framework that highlights the essentials and follows up on the processes that are expected to make a difference. In this chapter we specify our approach to reviewing GFAR performance: What does catalysing change in Agri-Food Research and Innovation Systems mean and how can we assess it?

#### 3.1. An analytical approach to assessing GFAR performance

GFAR is a global partnership, a forum that brings together diverse stakeholders that see the need to collaborate in order to transform the Agri-Food Research for Development (AR4D<sup>10</sup>) systems they are part of. The **GFAR approach** recognizes the emergence of such AR4D systems. At each relevant level (national, regional, global), to a greater or lesser degree stakeholders – policy makers, investors, researchers, innovators as well as service providers - are aware of the need to work together and take initiatives to effectively bring agricultural innovation to scale. GFAR provides a forum that empowers and supports such initiatives. The GFAR approach postulates emergent **AR4D systems can be transformed and strengthened through collective actions** undertaken by its stakeholders and represented by the GFAR constituencies.

Such a transformation is needed to ensure the results of agricultural research are brought to scale through widespread innovation. Such innovation to scale requires active involvement of a wide range of stakeholders beyond research, capable of developing and implementing the social, economic, technological and policy innovations necessary for widespread Agro-Food innovation to occur within a particular context. The review team takes a **Agro-food Research and Innovation System (ARIS)** to be a system that enables relevant stakeholders to work together to identify, explore, research, develop, pilot and bring to scale ideas, practices and/or technologies. In the case of GFAR not any idea, practice or technology is relevant to its mission. Ideas, practices and technologies developed and implemented during GFAR collective actions are expected to contribute to the technological, social, economical and/or policy innovation necessary for **Agri-Food and Nutrition Systems to become more inclusive and more sustainable**.

GFAR aims to catalyse the delivery of individual and institutional change among diverse constituencies, across the continuum of research, extension, education and enterprise with particular focus on resource-poor smallholders, women, youth and rural communities. **GFAR's Theory of Change** is that collective actions, advocacy and sharing of knowledge, catalysed through the interaction of GFAR partners in open and transparent

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<sup>10</sup> In GFAR documents the terms 'Agricultural Research for Development (AR4D) system' and 'Agricultural Research and Innovation System' (ARIS) are both used to refer to research systems transformed into a multi-stakeholder-driven systems that bring research results to scale through innovation. In this review we therefore use the terms as equivalents. For analytical purposes, the review team prefers to use ARIS, as it explicitly includes innovation to scale.

multi-stakeholder processes, will trigger transformational change in international, regional, national and local research and innovation institutions. *This will help transform national, regional and global pro-poor Agri-food Research and Innovation Systems to become more development-oriented, more effective and more accountable.*

Accordingly GFAR Partners have taken it upon themselves to catalyze<sup>11</sup> **collective actions** in six key focus areas that are strategically chosen for their potential to act as 'accelerators' for transforming and strengthening (pro-poor) Agri-Food Research for Development systems at various levels. These focus areas have been derived from the requirements for effective systems as identified in the GCARD Road Map<sup>12</sup>. As such they represent the **key outcome areas** in which GFAR partners wish to achieve institutional and individual change and eventually, system transformation (GFAR MTP 2014-2017):

- (1) Foresight and future needs - Farmers and national stakeholders empowered and informed to better negotiate their own agricultural futures
- (2) Partnerships for impact – Equitable and effective demand-driven partnerships enabled to transform agricultural research and innovation into impacts at scale
- (3) Transformative investments – in AR4D systems stimulated to better meet the needs and opportunities of the resource-poor
- (4) Capacity development – Collective initiatives fostered to generate new capacities in transforming AR4D systems
- (5) Research in development contexts – Agricultural research and knowledge embedded into rural development agendas and better meeting societal needs
- (6) Accountability, transformational change and development impacts in AR4D systems increased through greater strategic coherence and more transparent stakeholder involvement.

As compared to the GCARD Road Map, GFAR seems focus its outcome areas more towards including farmers and national stakeholders in defining AR4D priorities and actions; achieving impacts that respond to the needs and opportunities of the resource-poor; building transformative capacities rather than just capacities for the effective use of knowledge in development; and embedding agricultural research and knowledge rather than just linking it to development agendas. Also, while underscoring the need for accountability, GFAR seems to put less emphasis on the search for effective demonstration and reporting of outcomes.

In order **to assess the strength of the outcomes** in the various areas, we use a five-level scale specifying<sup>13</sup> part of the impact pathway for GFAR collective actions:

- **Level 1:** What opportunity for engagement has been created? (an event, conference, publication, funding, participation in high level seminar, etc. Example: GCARD)
- **Level 2:** Was active engagement during the event achieved? Did all stakeholders participate; did they like it? (Example: Majority of GCARD 3 participants said they actively participated and enjoyed the experience)

<sup>11</sup> The term 'catalyzing' is used to refer to facilitating, fostering, supporting, co-organizing and/or co-financing (part of) a collective action implemented by GFAR partners and other stakeholders.

<sup>12</sup> The GCARD Road Map: Transforming Agricultural Research for Development Systems for Global Impact. Rome: GCARD/GFAR/CGIAR 2010, Box 1, p.11.

<sup>13</sup> Adapted from Kirkpatrick's Model of Program Evaluation - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald\\_Kirkpatrick](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald_Kirkpatrick)



- **Level 3:** Did something happen? Were specific takeaways produced? I.e. new connections made, lessons learned, practices exchanged, etc. (Example: 80% of GCARD 3 participants said they were (somewhat to very) satisfied with the clear and specific outcomes of the conference.
- **Level 4:** Was joint action enabled? Did they apply it? I.e. lessons taken up by colleagues; an actionable proposal developed, a joint agenda drawn up. (Example: During the partnership session we drew up a plan for joint action)
- **Level 5:** So what? Was institutional change contributed to? Was the plan implemented, the partnership sustained and did it lead to any institutional modification? (Example: A regional platform included women and youth representatives)

This scale could be built further towards defining indicators for assessing institutional transformation and impact. The scale can be utilized and further developed at a future stage as part of GFAR strategic evaluative model. However, such an assessment extends far beyond the scope of this brief review.

GFAR's strategy towards contributing to transformational change is to encourage and support its partners to engage relevant stakeholders in **four lines of activity expected to help trigger transformational change**: (1) Sharing and Using Knowledge, (2) Partnership Development, (3) Collective Advocacy and (4) Transforming Institutions (See table 1 below)

Along these lines GFAR partners, assisted by the Secretariat, support AR4D stakeholders in preparing, organizing and implementing collective actions for institutional and individual change. Eventually, the sum total of outcomes of these different types of collective actions in the various focus areas, at various levels, in various regions is expected to lead to demonstrable transformations in AR4D systems that strengthen their effectiveness, accountability and development-orientation.

**Table 1: Lines of activity GFAR and GFAR Secretariat**

<b>Lines of activity GFAR engages in:</b>		<b>Catalyzing role GFAR Secretariat:</b>
1	Using and sharing knowledge	Enhancing Knowledge and Information Management
2	Partnership Development	Facilitating effective partnership development
3	Collective advocacy	Enabling collective advocacy
4	Transforming institutions	Stimulating organizational/institutional change

However, not all these activities are independent of each other. It is hard to imagine building a partnership without sharing and using knowledge, or to engage in collective advocacy without being in a partnership that develops the knowledge and messages to inform the advocacy effort. Similarly, without a concerted advocacy drive it is hard to imagine achieving institutional transformation. In short, while it may not always be the case, we postulate the engagement by GFAR partners in different activities is accumulative, from top to bottom one builds up to the other. As for the outcome areas we expect the main outcomes of each collective action to align with one or the other. Even if other, secondary outcomes may contribute to other outcome areas as well.

In order to assess **the quality of the multi-stakeholder engagement** in a particular transformative process, we will use the process requirements on which GFAR anchors its approach to catalysing the above multi-stakeholder processes in distinct **process requirements**: In GFAR-supported processes (1) all stakeholders should be equally represented creating a level playing field for all. Besides, they should be (2) demand-driven, (3) development-centred, (4) action-oriented, (5) knowledge-sharing, (6) governance enhancing, (7) transformative, and should include (8) foresight-prioritization<sup>14</sup>.

### 3.2. Questions the review seeks to answer

The review will address a set of evaluative questions (1.) in order to be able to answer the forward-looking ones (2.):

- 3. How relevant and effective are GFAR collective actions to the transformation of national, regional and global ARI4D systems?**
  - a. How do GFAR collective actions contribute to accelerating (institutional) change in ARI4D systems?
  - b. What contributions, outcomes and potential for impact in ARI4D systems are generated during the process?
  - c. How relevant are these within the national, regional and global contexts of change in ARI4D systems?
- 4. How can the effectiveness of GFAR collective actions be further improved?**
  - a. What are plausible explanations for the degree of effectiveness of GFAR collective actions?
  - b. What can GFAR do to improve the effectiveness of its collective actions?
  - c. What (more) can GFAR do to stimulate action-oriented learning amongst its partners to make collective actions be more effective?

This Interim Report will focus mostly on question 1, concluding with a number of recommendations of what can be done now to improve GFAR collective actions. The full report will include our full assessment of what the main drivers or blockages for GFAR effectiveness are (2a) and a proposal of a GFAR action-oriented learning agenda (2c).

### 3.3. Information and data gathering methods

The team identified and made use of available *documentation*, relevant articles and reports, particularly while preparing for the assessment (see Bibliography). Besides, *interviews* were held in person or via Skype, a *Sprockler survey* collected 'most memorable stories' from all partners, and 6 *case studies* of specific collective actions were done. From the documentation and the interviews the team harvested 72 *GFAR-related outcomes* that could be cross-referenced and their strength assessed. Below the sample selection and the strength of the evidence collected are discussed.

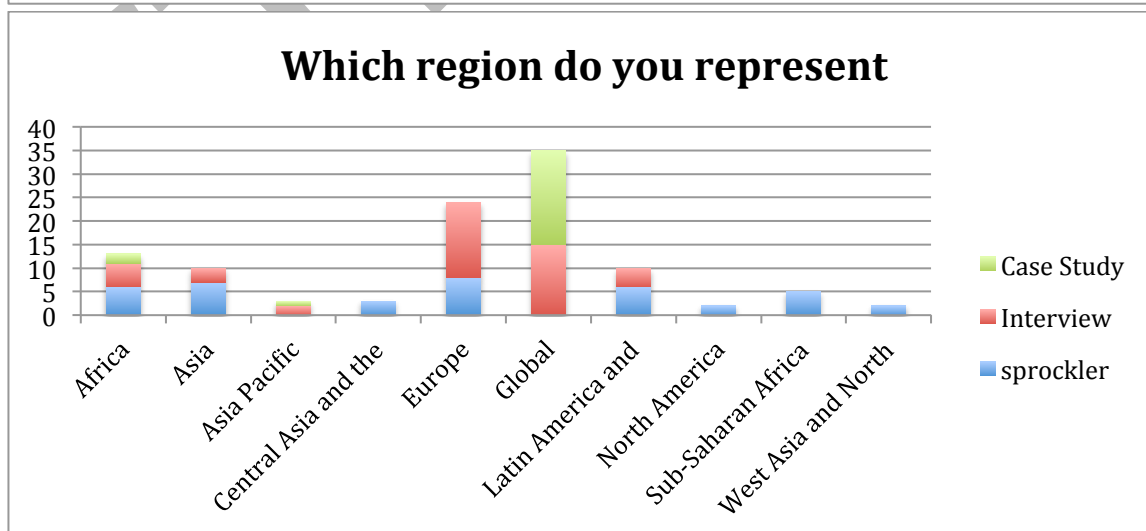
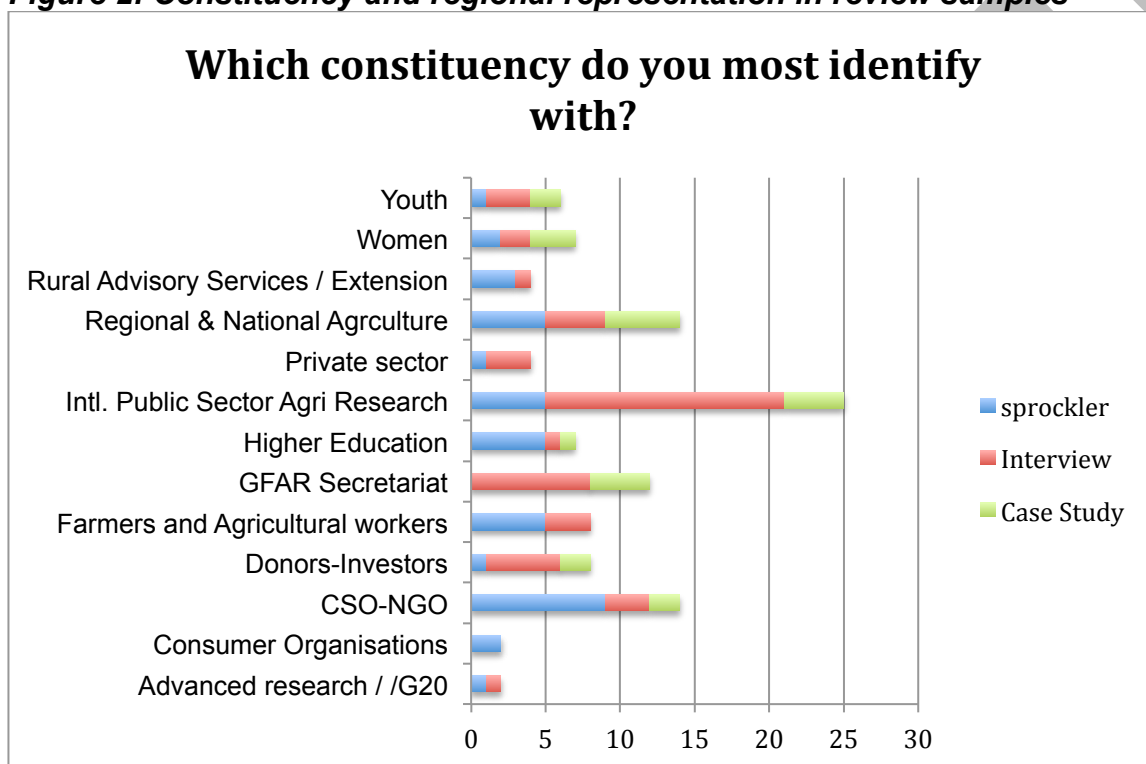
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<sup>14</sup> Adapted from: GFAR Theory of Change (ToC), Annex 3.

### 3.3.1. Selection of interview and survey samples

A list of possible informants was compiled. The GFAR Secretariat suggested most names as persons with at least some experience in GFAR-related activities; the team added a few. Almost one hundred persons were eventually approached for an interview, of which the team managed to interview 81. One group of 47 interviewees was selected to ensure coverage of the diversity of stakeholders, GFAR constituencies, regional platforms, types of membership (long/short, active/less active) and, the 21 collective actions GFAR is, or has been, engaging intensively (see Table 2 below). An additional 23 interviewees were selected specifically as key informants for the six case studies. Another 11 were interviewed more informally as key informants that could be expected to shed light on particular issues that caught our attention during the review.

Figure 2: Constituency and regional representation in review samples



For the Sprockler survey over 450 GFAR members (cf. Figure 1, par. 2.2) were approached of which 40 responded sharing their most memorable experience and/or their views on GFAR operations. The survey was offered in English and Spanish. The representativeness of the three samples in terms of constituencies and regions is shown in Figure 2.

### 3.3.2. Selection of collective actions and case studies

The review team considered 21 GFAR collective actions (CAs) for closer scrutiny, see table below. Six were selected for doing a quick case study ensuring (1) a fair coverage of different types of collective actions and (2) a variety of different constituencies involved (see CAs marked with an asterisk \*). For all other CAs at least one interview with a key informant was done.

**Table 2: List of GFAR collective actions considered for case studies**

<b>Collective Action</b>	<b>Type</b>
APAARI:	Regional forum
* FORAGRO: Latin America	Regional forum
AARINENA:	Regional forum
FARA: Africa	Regional forum
CACAARI:	Regional forum
China (CAAS)	Regional forum
EFARD: Europe	Regional forum
* GCARD Stakeholder inputs into CGIAR programming	Constituency mobilization
* YPARD: Mobilizing youth	Constituency mobilization
* GAP: Women's empowerment	Constituency mobilization
GFRAS: Advisory services	Constituency mobilization
GCHERA: Education reform	Constituency mobilization
AIRCA: Advanced research	Constituency mobilization
Foresight: Community foresight/hub	Thematic actions
Viable futures for rural communities: Mediterranean dialogues	Thematic actions
* CIARD & GODAN: open data	Thematic actions
GACSA & UNFCCC: Climate change	Thematic actions
Farmers' Rights and Biodiversity	Thematic actions
* PROLINOVA: Promoting Local Innovation	Thematic actions
GAFFSP, IFAD: Transformative Investment	Thematic actions
TAP: Innovation capacity development	Thematic actions

### 3.3.3. Harvesting and classifying outcomes

To assign GFAR-related outcomes to a particular predefined outcome area is not always straightforward. Many if not most, collective actions produce outcomes in more than one area. However, these diverse outcomes are not all equally visible or specific enough to be qualified as plausible<sup>15</sup>. Therefore it was decided to approach the identification and

<sup>15</sup> Outcomes of which origin, specifications and context could be established and adequately triangulated with information from different sources, the review team took to be 'plausible'.

classification of outcomes per outcome area in 2 consecutive steps. The first was to ask both interviewees and survey respondents to indicate to which outcome areas (max 2) they believe GFAR action had contributed most, and to provide examples. Secondly, the review team collected a sample of plausible outcomes from the interviews, survey, case studies and other documentation, and assigned each of these to one outcome area on the basis of the information available. This latter sample was used for the review and the assessment of the strength of GFAR-related outcomes. Comparative figures of the different samples are given in Table 3. The fact that the number of the review sample and the number of responses to the survey are the same is coincidental.

**Table 3: Characterization of outcomes from different sources**

<b>Source:</b>	<b>Review</b>		<b>Interviews</b>		<b>Survey</b>	
	<b>Nr</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Nr</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Nr</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Key outcome area</b>						
Stakeholder empowerment/foresight	19	26%	16	36%	21	29%
Partnerships for impact	11	15%	13	28%	15	21%
Transformative investments	3	4%	3	7%	4	6%
New capacity initiatives	12	17%	5	11%	13	18%
Research and knowledge embedded in development context	10	14%	5	11%	11	15%
Strategic coherence/ stakeholder involvement/ accountability	17	24%	3	7%	8	11%
<b>Total responses:</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3 demonstrates that all agree that most outcomes have been generated in the areas of *stakeholder empowerment/foresight*, *partnerships for impact* and, *new capacity initiatives*. On the contrary, few outcomes are qualified in the area of *transformative investments*. Perhaps this is not surprising as it refers to an outcome area addressed by GFAR with IFAD only. Another remarkable issue is that the team on the basis of its selection has identified more outcomes in the area of *Strategic coherence/ stakeholder involvement*. In general, however, the consistency between the three sources is remarkable; it confirms an adequate spread and focus of the outcome sample used for the review.

### 3.3.4. Scope and limitations

The above analytical framework and the evidence collected over the past three months enable the team to identify and review the variety and strength of GFAR-related engagements and outcomes. It also provides detailed insight into how GFAR performance is jointly constructed and appreciated by its partners. Together these provide a basis to assess, as far as possible within the given time frame, GFAR-related engagements and outcomes, their strength in terms of contributing to intended transformative changes as well as, GFAR's relevance and **potential role** in transforming Agri-Food Research and Innovation Systems. Determining the impact of GFAR on transformative change in such systems is beyond the scope of this assessment, but the review will help identify challenges for future learning and improvement of GFAR-related interventions

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Introduction

In this chapter the review findings are presented. First six cases are reviewed to reveal GFAR's modus operandi with regard to collective actions (4.2). Next, the evidence from the case studies is used to summarise how GFAR catalyses change in Agri-Food Research and Innovation systems (4.3). Then an illustrative sample of GFAR-related outcomes is reviewed and its strength assessed (4.4) and the next paragraph zooms in on GFAR partner engagement: how do GFAR partners mobilize multi-stakeholder action towards a common goal (4.5). Next, paragraph 4.6 presents the findings on GFAR relevance and on its contributions to catalysing transformative change in the AR4D systems. Finally, paragraph 4.6 identifies a number of GFAR governance challenges and 4.7 summarises the findings with regard to the GFAR Secretariat, management and organization.

### 4.2. GFAR collective actions: 6 Case studies

The mission reviewed 6 Collective Actions GFAR is involved to gain an understanding of the modus operandi of GFAR. For each case study at least 3 key informants were interviewed. In this chapter we will first present the abstracts of the case studies to be able to extract a more comprehensive understanding of how GFAR 'catalyzes collective actions'.

#### 4.2.1. FORAGRO – Regional Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean

The Latin American Forum for Agricultural Research and Technology Development (FORAGRO) is a regional network that includes all actors of the agricultural science, technology and innovation sectors across the Americas. Its Executive Committee governs FORAGO; it is responsible for organizing the network, elaborating and implementing actions at the national, regional and international level. FORAGRO's head office is hosted by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) at its headquarter in Coronado, Costa Rica.

**Mission:** serve as a forum to promote dialogue around needs and opportunities; to generate analysis and proposals; engaging partnerships that strengthen science, technology and innovation systems for the sustainable development of agriculture in the Americas. As a forum, FORAGRO supports the debate regarding research and innovation that impacts the Agri-food system of the Americas.

**Vision:** to be recognized as the main Forum of the Americas where the future of agricultural science, technology and innovation systems is discussed and shared. Its regional representation is broad and includes: public sector, private sector, academia, rural organizations, women and youth groups.

#### *Collective Action*

FORAGRO's main functions:

- Catalyse and promote improvements; sensitize, inform and facilitate the exchange of information between its constituents and other actors in support of agricultural research, technological development and innovation and fair access to its benefits to respond to the needs of the sector and of the territories in the Americas.
- Generate relevant information and knowledge in priority research, development and innovation topics that contribute to the decision-making of political actors, productive sector and scientific-technological systems.
- Facilitate inclusive mechanisms for the representation of its stakeholder groups.
- Represent FORAGRO stakeholders at the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR).

### *Outcomes/uptake*

- As a network leading on agricultural research, FORAGRO was created in 1997 and immediately joined GFAR. Both FORAGRO and GFAR have coexisted and supported each other ever since. GFAR has offered substantive guidance to mobilize its constituencies and further institutionalise the forum by supporting the drafting of a Charter and creating a legal framework.
- As a leader in Agricultural Research, FORAGRO appreciates the opportunities created by GFAR to strategically engage with other regional groups/platforms, including South-South cooperation at the global level. In return, through its national networks (i.e. COPROFAM, CARI, INTA, INIAS, etc.), FORAGRO contributes to GFAR's sharing and using knowledge across Latin American countries (LAC).
- FORAGRO recognizes GFAR as an ally for catalysing Latin American initiatives. It also recognizes GFAR partnership initiatives are central to mobilizing potential partners and to consolidate on-going initiatives. In this FORAGRO follows the GFAR agenda.
- FORAGRO, as a regional platform also retains the right to decline proposals/strategies /agreements that might not be at the heart of its own priorities and future work plans.
- FORAGRO communicates with local organizations and has a broad coverage through GFAR engagement.
- GFAR/YPARD is key to rural youth in the region due to unemployment that particularly affects this group.
- The Caribbean has identified particular needs and could benefit from a coherent strategy forged by local organizations (CARI) and GFAR/FORAGRO.

### *Relevance of GFAR support*

Currently, GFAR support to FORAGRO includes:

- Budgetary and logistical/organizational support: with the signature of a letter of agreement (LOA) on September 26, 2017 for the amount of USD 82,360; to facilitate workshop; develop materials and communications.
- Policy and institutional support for organizing multi-stakeholder processes (FORAGRO 1<sup>st</sup> Charter Meeting in August 2017 at IICA Headquarters in Costa Rica)
- Limited communication and information support, given most information is shared only in English.
- Methodological support in organizing/moderating multi-stakeholder events

The relationship between GFAR and FORAGRO is strong. FORAGRO is currently consolidating its legal structure and GFAR support is considered critical to help them achieve representation at the global level. As a regional platform it may offer many insights and "lessons learnt" to other GFAR members (groups or platforms). Finally, FORAGRO remains sensitive to GFAR 'imposing' its agenda on the region, feeling that certain topics need more attention such as indigenous people's contribution and visibility and particularly, gender issues need more visibility and the development of a concrete research and operational strategy, including mainstreaming.

#### 4.2.2. Gender in Agriculture Partnership (GAP)

Since its launch at the Global Conference on Women in Agriculture (GCWA) in March 2012 in New Delhi, the Gender and Agriculture Partnership (GAP) addresses the core "*Gender in agriculture*" challenges including research, development of tools and sharing information from grassroots organizations to research and other stakeholder constituencies. GAP is a virtual network of over 1000 members from academia, research community (CGIAR), regional agricultural networks in LAC, Africa and Asia, governmental bodies and the private sector.

**Mission:** "*place gender equity and women's empowerment at the heart of agricultural policy, research and development, capacity-development and institutional-building agendas.*" To ensure household and community wellbeing and consider agricultural roles beyond food production and as a source of income.<sup>16</sup> GAP calls for "*A transformed agriculture where gender equity enables food, nutrition and income security for the rural poor*". To do so, GAP acts as a multi-stakeholder network to produce gender equitable collective actions in agriculture.

##### *Collective Action*

GAP sees as its roles as facilitating dialogue and debate on gender equity in agriculture; it also brings partners together to share gender success stories and enables partners to develop multilevel gender sensitive strategies and policies at the national, regional and international level.

GAP is structured through an innovative group of committed "catalytic people" who work at the international level to foster collective action and support organizational change in specific areas. These areas include

- Knowledge sharing,
- Active engagement through programmatic activities
- Advocacy at all levels
- Mentoring younger generations
- Engaging women leaders and professionals.

GAP Partnerships and committed stakeholders<sup>17</sup> include GFAR, Regional Fora, FAO, IFAD and WFP; CGIAR System; Civil society and multilateral organizations such as UN Women, World Bank, UNRISD, WHO, development organizations and important thematic movements such as SUN, GFRAS and YPARD.

<sup>16</sup> Source: [www.gender-gap.net](http://www.gender-gap.net) and <http://www.gender-gap.net/content/cgiar-gender-webinar-gender-mainstreaming-participatory-market-chain-approach-pmca> accessed October 9, 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Completed list of GAP Stakeholders as stated in <http://gender-gap.net/content/partners>



As a knowledge platform, GAP was expected to influence the CGIAR as well as the grassroots level and generate gender-specific communication by reuniting research and extension, facilitating knowledge sharing through the CGIAR System.

In conclusion, given the very limited funding allocated which made difficult to reach broader audiences, GAP was moderately effective in bringing gender to the forefront. It played a strong role through GFAR advocating the incorporation of gender in CGIAR programmes, particularly in some key decision-making bodies. As a result, playing an important role in institutionalizing gender in research. The people we interviewed feel that the knowledge GAP shares, is too broad and tends to be mostly academic. As a partnership it is struggling to find a clear strategic niche amongst the many global networking initiatives on gender that already exist, also among the Rome-based-agencies.

### *Outcomes/uptake*

- While GAP claims to have more than 1000 members, most are representatives of CGIAR, Networks, Universities, and relatively few grassroots organizations.
- GAP members are expected to visit the GAP website to receive information and interact
- GAP can be considered “responsive” but not very “activity” oriented. Presenting a deep gender expertise, but lacking investment in staff time and opportunities beyond the sharing of information through webinars and a few international events (COP 21, CSW, GCAD2 and 3, etc.).
- Because of this situation, it was not easy to collect information, regular records of usage or the verification of ways GAP information is used (with the exception of a number of hits recorded on the GAP website for webinars and a CGIAR survey)., but that information does not lead to regular records of usage or impact.
- GAP shared information and contributed to GFAR partnerships with a paper on Foresight and future needs and Research in Development contexts.
- Most interviewees agreed that the information shared was mostly academic and produced by the CGIAR or universities. Very few examples illustrated direct engagement in the field, and even though GAP did not have implementation capabilities, practical and participatory perspectives were not exploited.\

### *Relevance of GFAR support*

Without GFAR the GAP probably would not have been operational (or even exist). GFAR provided physical and operational space for the GAP. However, it is widely acknowledged that just providing “space” is not enough. GFAR staff was also helpful and tried to bridge the gap to include a broader audience with a communication strategy to reach to a broader audience. Yet there are various limitations. GAP used Linked-In groups, Google groups, etc. but not all constituencies seemed to be able to adopt these communication modalities (WhatsApp, messenger, etc. were also suggested). Adequate budgetary and strategic support, were lacking. GAP was active, moving along through the connections established by committed catalysers, the Rome Based Agencies’ gender focal points and CGIAR Centres’ gender experts. This combination of high-level gender expertise from various sources, including all geographic areas and networks, was not “exploited” to it’s fullest by GFAR leadership. To represent GFAR/GAP at international gender events, in certain cases GFAR staff with no expertise on gender was used,

leading to low moral on the part of the GAP coordinator and catalysers. In short, GFAR prides itself to champion gender awareness across its constituencies but GFAR nor its partners equipped the GAP with realistic staff and budgetary resources to match its ambition.

### *Future GFAR Support*

The GAP could benefit from stronger support from GFAR. First, to develop a stronger profile, a clear agenda and a creative focus on gender across all GFAR's roles, outcome areas and process requirements. Second, integration with other GFAR collective actions would be necessary - thematically and strategically. Third, more adequate staff time. The former GAP coordinator had a limited time engagement (three days per month), which is clearly insufficient to engage in a variety of task and demanding activities. Currently, there is no coordinator on board, with the departure of the staff member and gender tasks have been derived or on hold. Fourth, strategic guidance on fundraising agenda to match the mission and research capabilities of the network and to provide for staff travel, investment in publications beyond the web materials, events and support/foster creative opportunities to materialize/crystallize grassroots involvement and support the regional fora. GAP partners must provide a clear account of what can be contributed to GFAR. Most partners mentioned their expectation to receive funding from GFAR, even though this is not a sustainable model of engagement. The setting of a coherent and mutually benefiting agenda is a must to avoid the raising of expectations, to institutionalize follow up, monitoring and the engagement from GAP, GFAR and its many partners.

### **4.2.3. Global Open-Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN)**

At the 2012 G-8 Summit, G-8 leaders committed to the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, the next phase of a shared commitment to achieving global food security. As part of their commitment they agreed to "share relevant agricultural data available from G-8 countries with African partners and convene an international conference on Open Data for Agriculture, to develop options for the establishment of a global platform to make reliable agricultural and related information available to African farmers, researchers and policymakers, considering existing agricultural data systems." Next was the G8 International Conference on Open Data for Agriculture in April 2013. The conference worked to 'obtain commitment and action from nations and relevant stakeholders to promote policies and invest in projects that provide open access to publicly funded global agriculturally relevant data streams, making such data readily accessible to users in Africa and also world-wide, and ultimately supporting a sustainable increase in food security in developed and developing countries. The GODAN initiative was a by-product of this conference and was announced at the Open Government Partnership Conference in October 2013<sup>18</sup>.

### *Collective Action*

The Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN) initiative seeks to support global efforts to make agricultural and nutritionally relevant data available, accessible, and usable for unrestricted use worldwide. The initiative focuses on building high-level policy and public and private institutional support for open data. The initiative encourages collaboration and cooperation among existing agriculture and open data activities,

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.godan.info/about>

without duplication, and brings together all stakeholders to solve long-standing global problems. Open access to research, and open publication of data, are vital resources for food security and nutrition, driven by farmers, farmer organizations, researchers, extension experts, policy makers, governments, and other private sector and civil society stakeholders participating in "innovation systems" and along value chains. Lack of institutional, national, and international policies and openness of data limit the effectiveness of agricultural and nutritional data from research and innovation<sup>19</sup>.

GODAN Vision<sup>20</sup>: *We are a group of actors working towards a world where the value chain for agriculture and nutrition is more efficient, innovative, equitable (e.g. by gender, socioeconomic status) and accountable; from, for example, greater yields and access to markets for farmers, through to more nutritious and safe food on plates.*

*GODAN engages in three types of activities: 1) Advocate the benefits of open-data 2) mobilize members (600+) to start sharing their data 3) provide tools and resources on 'how to' open-data.*

GODAN is open to all public and private organizations and there is no fee to join. GODAN and its Secretariat do not manage funds for agriculture and nutrition open data projects or programmes, although donors may use the GODAN name to attach to funding streams. The GODAN Secretariat has an estimated five-year budget of approximately \$8.5 million, with equivalent of around five staff full time employees. Primary donors supporting the GODAN Secretariat with both in-kind and financial resources include the governments of the US, UK and NL, and FAO, CABI, CGIAR, CTA and The Open Data Institute (UK).

### *GFAR Contributions*

**GFAR** has been contributing and supporting GODAN by providing the equivalent of up to 50% of a full-time staff member to GODAN. GFAR's previous investments in ICT capacity development and open data and in creating the Coherence in Information for Agricultural Research for Development (CIARD) since 2007 significantly contributed to its inception; including its own Route map to Information Nodes and Gateways (RING). The RING is a global directory of datasets and data services for agricultural research for development (ARD). It is the principal tool created through the CIARD initiative to allow information providers to register their services and datasets in various categories and so facilitate the discovery of sources of agriculture-related information across the world. The RING aims to provide an infrastructure to improve the accessibility of the outputs of agricultural research and of information relevant to ARD management. Today the CIARD-RING is the biggest global dataset catalogue for food and agriculture now endorsed by GODAN. One GFAR Secretariat member maintains it with 20% of her time dedicated to it. Another 35% of her time is dedicated to working on 8 GODAN Action projects, in the focal area of data standardization<sup>21</sup>. These are in fact Collective Actions to support the vision of GODAN. Besides providing technical standards expertise and hosting CIARD-RING, GFAR signed a letter of agreement (LOA) with CAB International which hosts GODAN from May 1,

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.godan.info/pages/statement-purpose>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.godan.info/pages/theory-change/>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.godan.info/godan-action>

2015 to January 31, 2017 to provide GODAN with staff time to undertake the role of Strategic Partnerships Leader (see LOA and TORs).

### Outcomes/uptake

GFAR'S contribution to GODAN aligns with the following lines of activity: **Collective Advocacy** (GFAR staff was instrumental in advocating for GODAN to FAO especially in the early days of GODAN to establish credibility and see the initiative as more than a technical issue and raising awareness of Farmer's Data Rights, leading to a draft to add a Data-Rights clause to the International Seed Treaty; presenting at GODAN meeting at the UN ECOSOC in September 2016 on the importance of developing equitable systems from the outset was highlighted by informants.) and **Institutional Transformation** (Institutions and Gov't pledging for Open-Data, increase in data-sets being open) **Knowledge Sharing** (GFAR staff knowledge and experience in partnerships, technical standards, CIARD-RING, farmer's rights).

### Box 4: The contribution of the Strategic Partnerships Leader

- Provide Advocacy and technical support for partnership building
- Work on Strategic issues related to opening data in agriculture and nutrition and advocate good policies and practices that would ensure equitable access for the resource poor
- Provide strategic direction to partnership management by the GODAN Secretariat, to enable it to achieve its objectives.
- Contribute to development and management of robust relationship management plans for the GODAN Secretariat's key corporate, public sector and international partnerships.
- Bring together agricultural, nutritional and open data fields and actors to stimulate and implement the use of open data at farmer and other stakeholders level and within policy making;
- Promote strong and productive working relationships across the GODAN Secretariat and especially with the Strategic Communications Leader.
- Harmonise activities with others, share knowledge and lessons and identify evidence of impact of engagement in agricultural/nutritional open data activities with the Secretariat researcher / analyst.
- Maintain excellent records of all open data partnership engagement GFAR has contributed to for use by the GODAN Secretariat.
- Contribute to the management of a framework of national and international events and dialogues to stimulate end-user engagement with open data and to build the GODAN community of practice, especially where these events are partner-led.

GODAN engages its members (Research Organizations, Private Sector (through Hackatons), Policy Advisors - Gov't (showcasing success stories such as India's ground nut success using weather and market data to improve yield AND livelihood to encourage pledge to open its data), Agri-entrepreneurs, Agri Project Managers/Development Agents (Ministry of Agriculture), Academia/Journalists (training them via webinars, How-To publications on where to find data and validate sources), Regional Farmer's Organizations (organizing inputs for crops, training on data-management). GODAN created 8 Workgroups as *spaces for partners to collaborate, share ideas, experiences and ways forward on how open data can be used to solve key issues and challenges in the agriculture and nutrition sectors*<sup>22</sup>. These workgroups are in line with the GODAN Actions that have received funding for a 3-year period until 2019.

An example of the uptake from GFAR advocacy is the creation of a workgroup on Data Rights and Responsible Data which continues to 'coordinate efforts to explore issues of

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.godan.info/working-groups-list>

open data, data ownership and data governance in the context of agriculture and nutrition. Besides, GODAN is able to show many examples of uptake, like (1) Ground Nuts case in India in which an Indian Coop introduced climate/weather data and market data for cultivating decisions and 2 years later production and income had risen by 30%; (2) Governments creating open-data policies; seeing the impact of climate change on agriculture via data, (3) Increase in data-sets becoming available on CIARD-RING, (4) 7 African countries pledging in August 2017 to open their data (Nairobi pledge). Clearly these outcomes are not singularly related to GFAR, however, they are good examples of how GFAR through networked actions contributes to their emergence. Finally, GFAR has contributed to 4 GODAN documents: (1) “Responsible Data in Agriculture”, (2) Ownership of Open Data: Governance Options for Agriculture and Nutrition”, (3) “A global data ecosystem for agriculture and food” and (4) the CTA paper “Open data and Smallholder Food and Nutritional Security”, which have been quoted and have evoked interest around issues in opening agricultural data<sup>23</sup>.

### *Relevance of GFAR support*

Our informants underscore the relevance of GFAR support to GODAN. Without GFAR, GODAN would certainly have happened. However, without GFAR’s Data and Information Support (CIARD-RING); its support in organizing/ moderating multi-stakeholder events and, its advocacy support – advocating for farmer’s data rights, building collaboration between key institutions and for improving interoperability and standardization of data – it would not have yielded the same results<sup>24</sup>. However, informants would like to see GFAR change its research agenda; continue to advocate to governments on the importance of data access and its vital impact as a link between farmers and research and having a direct impact on small holder farmer’s ability to increase their livelihood by connecting them to markets in real-time. Empower farmers to do their own advocacy; working through CAADP investing more in agriculture. GFAR should also publish some opinion pieces, beyond blogs of what partners are doing if they are to play their advocacy role and be the voice of its constituencies. And lastly, assess the impact of data access and share the stories. And they would like to see all GFAR partners pledge to open their data to continue the Institutional Transformation.

## **4.2.4. Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD)**

### *Introduction*

YPARD is an online network run by young people, to support youth in the field of agricultural development. It envisions *sustainably improved livelihoods worldwide where young professionals are proactively contributing to innovative agricultural development*. Its mission is *to serve as a global collective platform through which young professionals can realize their full potential and contribute proactively towards innovative agricultural development*.<sup>25</sup> The network was launched in 2006 and has since grown substantially, with 15,000 members now registered globally, 45,000 Facebook page followers and 66 national representatives. A Global Coordination Unit (GCU) in Rome, regional coordinators and national representatives spread around the world support the network. A steering committee reviews financial activities, annual planning and strategic decisions

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.godan.info/working-groups-list>

<sup>24</sup> GFAR-open-data-2-pager.docx

<sup>25</sup> <http://ypard.net/who-we-are>

and an advisory group provides advice and input upon request from the GCU.<sup>26 27</sup> The idea for YPARD was born in April 2005, during the European Forum for Agricultural Research for Development (EFARD) Conference in Zurich; a working group for YPARD was created in December 2005, during the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) Annual General Meeting in Marrakesh. In the spring of 2006, in Wageningen, the Netherlands, the first large YPARD workshop was organized, where many young professionals contributed to the development of the mission, goals and objectives of YPARD which formed the basis of the YPARD structure with an interim Steering Committee, which included most of the founding members. The **official launch of YPARD** occurred in November 2006 at the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR) conference in New Delhi and because of this, GFAR is often attributed with starting YPARD.

YPARD has the following constituencies as members: Private Sector, Donors, Youth, Students, Research Organizations, Academia, Farmer Organizations and NGOs. Amongst these the most active are Youth, Donors and NGOs. Private Sector is following YPARD's activities as many have their own Youth Policies, according to informants as well as Young Farmer Organizations. Given the 15,000 members it is difficult to engage all of them and respond to their needs. "YPARD's growth is a challenge for network management in regards to maintaining the quality of information and knowledge, and providing sufficient support to its members. However, positive side effects are also associated with the network's growth. Improved agricultural practices are copied by elders who are inspired by YPARD members in their villages."<sup>28</sup>

### *Collective Action*

YPARD Objectives:

- Facilitate exchange of information and knowledge among young professionals across disciplines, professions, age and regions
- Broaden opportunities for YPs to contribute to strategic ARD policy debates
- To promote agriculture among young people
- Facilitate access to resources and capacity building opportunities<sup>29</sup>

YPARD is funded by Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and hosted by GFAR in FAO offices

To maximize engagement with its members YPARD uses its 66 country representatives to translate the global messages to their local needs as well as doing translation. Evidently, English language competence is a key barrier to greater participation from local youth. Although the online platform and mainstream social media channels are readily used, face-to-face meetings is seen to engage Youth the most to be more active and take a leadership role in a region or SC. For this reason, GFAR's continued sponsoring of Youth to AR4D events is important to YPARD.

YPARD meets several of GFAR's Collective Action process requirements: Development Centred; Action Oriented (creating concrete opportunities for Youth via internships,

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<sup>26</sup> YPARD External Review Report 2017

<sup>27</sup> <http://ypard.net/node/33517>

<sup>28</sup> YPARD External Review Report 2017

<sup>29</sup> <http://ypard.net/who-we-are>

mentoring, YAP, attending GCARD while actively participating as social media reporters and presenters) knowledge sharing (i.e: webinar series, internships etc); Governance Enhancing and Transformative (i.e.: over the past 10 years, Youth are seen as SC constituencies and YPARD is being consulted by policy makers) and lastly creating Equal Representation (although there is much work to do be done in this area, GFAR is a vehicle to ensure that Youth have a voice at key AR4D tables)

### *Outcomes/uptake*

GFAR provided YPARD with core support since its initial host university in Germany decided that it no longer wished to host the network. GFAR directly funds YPARD programs and GFAR Secretariat provides YPARD Secretariat with office space and facilities and with extensive administrative and communications support. GFAR's technical contribution to YPARD aligns with the following lines of activity: **1- Collective Advocacy and 2-Institutional Transformation.** GFAR provides Youth a voice on its Steering Committee with two seats (Global and Local); Mark Holderness, GFAR Executive Secretary sits on YPARD's SC and has administrative oversight over YPARD (approving time cards); GFAR reports on YPARD events to a broader audience via their website and blog; GFAR sponsors Youth to attend strategic AR4D meetings; GFAR introduces YPARD to influential people who would not give their time or attention otherwise and lastly GFAR influences the CGIAR and Regional Platforms to add Youth to their agenda. This advocacy has led to APAARI and AREANENA creating a seat for Youth leading to institutional change. Another indicator of advocacy leading to action is ICARDA approaching YPARD to design their youth policy.

GFAR contributes in disseminating YPARD programs to a wider audience; sponsoring attendance of Youth at key AR4D meetings. Their advocacy has led to Regional Fora putting youth on the institutional agenda of APAARI, FARA and ARENENA. ARENENA also contacted YPARD to consult on their Dryland Strategy. Another example of uptake is the creation of the Kenya Youth Business Trust now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year, which provides mentoring and capacity development for Youth.

### ***Box 5: An example of a YPARD/GFAR Thematic Collective Action: The YAP<sup>30</sup> (Youth AgriPreneurs Project)***

In 2015 GFAR addressed the lack of opportunities and access for youth in the agri-food sector through piloting the YAP Project in partnership with Young Professionals for Agricultural Research and Development (YPARD). The YAP Project commenced in January 2016 with a call for submissions with the young agripreneurs engaged on their journey with the YAP project from April 2016 until May 2017, presenting at GCARD3.

#### **Objectives:**

- Strengthen capacity of young agripreneurs to financially plan and manage their project and any future endeavours they might take on; young agripreneurs to receive business coaching and support from Mentors to financially plan and manage their projects.
- Raising awareness and aptitude in managing professional relationships that contribute to development

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.saiplatform.org/uploads/documents/YAPEvaluationReport2017\\_FINAL\\_approved.pdf](http://www.saiplatform.org/uploads/documents/YAPEvaluationReport2017_FINAL_approved.pdf)

Six selected young agripreneurs demonstrated their ability to successfully pitch their projects at the GCARD3 conference and several of them have since presented at other global conferences.

### **GFAR Contribution to YAP**

A total of US\$112,680 was invested in YAP Pilot Project. The Project received funding from EC (through GFAR), Agropolis, FAO Caribbean Regional Office and five private donors (64% direct funding), support from IFAD and in-kind support (36%) from the GFAR Secretariat and YPARD. A team of **GFAR and YPARD representatives managed the Project.**

### **YAP Pilot Project outcomes**

Examples reported by the YAP Team and YAPs of how their Projects have scaled out to their communities that show potential for ongoing positive outcomes are:

- New income for up to 50, previously unemployed, youth in rural Ethiopia
- New connections to government agencies and NGOs in Ethiopia and the Philippines with the potential to accelerate scaling out
- Local farmers in Barbados supported to diversify and increase (modestly at this point) their income streams from organic skin care products.
- One young agripreneur will shortly reach break even with his ICT enterprise, which is likely to enable him to continue to employ people. There is also a potential untold story of the impact his platform has had on the livelihoods of farmers in Nepal, due to the distribution of agricultural information.
- Commercial production of a prototype

**Unexpected outcomes:** A positive outcome was a significant boost in visibility of GFAR, YPARD, the YAP project and the projects of the young agripreneurs themselves. While YAP intended to showcase young people in agriculture, the YAP Project Team were surprised at the extent to which visibility occurred and affected not only the participants but also those who provided online submissions to the GFAR blog. In the submissions process in 2016 the GFAR monthly page views (averaged over the year) went up from 1,354 to 38,496 (almost 3000%). The amount of visitors (the nominal traffic figure measured over the year), increased from 769 visitors/month to 15,746 (2000%). The monthly amount of comments went from an average of 6 comments/month to 5,800<sup>31</sup>

### **Next steps for YAP:**

As the immediate next step, GFAR Secretariat<sup>32</sup> is sponsoring and providing technical support to a meeting and process organized through YPARD Philippines in late 2017 that will catalyse the development of a mentoring toolkit to enable many other organizations to take up such mentoring processes effectively, thus markedly broadening the impact of the approach.

### *Future GFAR support*

In terms of future support, the informants felt that GFAR most important contribution would be for continued (2) logistical/organizational support in continuing to host them in

<sup>31</sup> [http://www.saiplatform.org/uploads/documents/YAPEvaluationReport2017\\_FINAL\\_approved.pdf](http://www.saiplatform.org/uploads/documents/YAPEvaluationReport2017_FINAL_approved.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> Source: Mark Holderness, GFAR Executive Secretary



their offices and offer valuable sounding board advice and in providing (5) methodological support in organizing multi-stakeholder events and (6) policy and institutional backing in obtaining further institutional support for organizing multi-stakeholder processes. GFAR's continued sponsoring of Youth to AR4D events is important to YPARD.

#### 4.2.5. PROLINNOVA – Promoting Local Innovation

*Strengthening and transforming national Agro-Food Innovation Systems through building multi-stakeholder action-research partnerships for farmer-led innovation*<sup>33</sup>

In December 1999 thirty people from Northern and Southern NGOs and a few like-minded individuals from international agricultural research centers came together in Rambouillet, France, to prepare for the first GFAR Global Conference in 2000, in Dresden, Germany. The GFAR Conference endorses the PROLINNOVA Agenda, which is included in the GFAR work plans as an emerging Global Partnership Program (GPP). From 2001-2003 the GPP was further operationalized and with strong support from GFAR Secretariat, raising adequate funds proves very hard. Eventually, the GPP is started up in three countries with a small grant from IFAD – Ethiopia, Uganda and Ghana – and the international network is launched in 2004. During 2004-2007, the partnership expands to cover CPs in nine countries, with support from Netherlands' Government, amongst others. The French DURAS program funds the start up of action research on Local Innovation Support Funds (LISFs). In 2005-2006 the elected PROLINNOVA oversight Group organized itself internally and formulated some basic principles and operational rules to guide the functioning of the network. After 2007 the network expands to 18 CPs, several of whom mobilize substantial direct funding. The Rockefeller foundation co-funds LISF action-research. Several new initiatives are undertaken. In 2010, the PROLINNOVA Strategy 2011-2015 focuses on expanding the work on Participatory Innovation Development (PID) on Climate Change and stronger regional networking. However, since 2011 the level of international activities has to be reduced and the International Partners Workshop agrees on a minimum level of activities for all in the absence of core funding. Multi-stakeholder groups in new countries continue to join and form new CPs. Enhancing adaptive capacity and local resilience in the face of climate change becomes an important concept for PID in a number of new projects.

##### *Collective action for transforming Agro-Food Innovation Systems*

PROLINNOVA “aims to build partnerships through which organizations and individuals agree to jointly analyze, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate activities, sharing resources, risks, costs and benefits in order to achieve the overall goal of making farmer-led innovation part and parcel of ARD programs and institutions. Partnerships in PROLINNOVA also create important entry points for mainstreaming Participatory Innovation Development into AR4D organizations and programs by engaging staff from these organizations in the partnership” (Stocktaking, 2015, p. 20). “PROLINNOVA was set up as an informal network that grew into a community of practice for sharing and learning. Its main emphasis has been on building multi-stakeholder partnerships at the national level, the Country Platforms (CPs). Currently (Dec 2015) 21 semi-autonomous

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<sup>33</sup> Based on PROLINNOVA Stocktaking ‘Ten years of promoting farmer-led innovation’, Synthesis of Findings, December 2015 and complementary interviews.

CPs exist. And the international network includes more than 600 subscribers to the PROLINNOVA Yahoo-group for sharing and learning across countries and for pursuing the PROLINNOVA agenda at the international level” (Stocktaking, 2015, p. 20).

### *Outcomes/Uptake*

The outcomes are organized along the lines of the overall objectives of the GPP, as agreed by all partners at its inaugural meeting in Ethiopia:

1. *Increased understanding and further development of approaches and methodologies for promotion of Local Innovation (LI) and Participatory Innovation Development (PID).* Methods were developed, evaluated and documented for (1) recognizing Local Innovation (LI), more than 1500 farmers innovators and innovations identified and documented, (2) farmer-led joint experimentation, more than 300 joint experiments implemented, and (3) for operating LISFs through 3-6 years of action-research in 8 countries. LISF management committees processed over 1200 applications, approved 65% (45% by women) and disbursed grants of 5-1500 euros. Besides a number of supportive methods and tools were developed such as, the Farmer Innovation Fair, Farmer-led Documentation and the PID institutionalization assessment tool.
2. *Building capacity of development actors to implement and advocate for LI/PID.* PROLINNOVA partners organized ten international trainings and numerous CP-level events, participants totaling 200 and almost 11,000 respectively. Besides, a range of supplementary activities, such as N-S, S-S and International Support Team (IST) backstopping visits, took place. The monitoring of the impact of training and backstopping activities has been limited due to strongly diminished of international funding.
3. *International mainstreaming and institutionalization of LI/PID.* PROLINNOVA contributions in this area include: 3 international workshops organized, 212 contributions made to international events, 235 publications – incl. 11 books, 49 articles in journals and magazines, 8 policy briefs and 4 video films – and web-based information services – including web site, Facebook page, PID Circular, and Yahoo group (600+ members). Besides, PROLINNOVA members are active in 9 international bodies, mostly related to GFAR and Regional Fora. A survey among AR4D professionals indicated that most of them feel PROLINNOVA has contributed significantly to international awareness on LI/PID.
4. *Country-level mainstreaming and institutionalizing LI/PID* started with the establishment of 21 Country Platforms for farmer-led innovation. Apart from this, some considerable gains were achieved, i.e. integration in curricula of universities and in key NGOs (Adams and Fernando (2009)). However, progress regarding mainstreaming LI/PID into public AR4D organizations is as yet precarious, often depending on the support of one particular policy maker. At the same time, organizations and individuals in the CPs do not normally engage in policy dialogue and mainstreaming as part of their regular work, and have not acquired the capacities required for such advocacy work. And training in this field is still at a beginning.
5. *Effective functioning of PROLINNOVA as a learning network.* Main mechanisms for networking and learning included: the annual International Partners Workshop (IPW), cross-visits between CPs, visit by the International Support Team (IST), Yahoo email groups, website and Facebook page. Besides person-to-person

meetings connectivity is built on email and web-based technologies, such as Skype. Documentation includes annual financial reports of the CPs, external evaluations and studies and an annual electronic evaluation. Besides, PROLINNOVA actively participated in GFAR governance structures and events.

#### *Resource mobilization and use*

PROLINNOVA funding between 2003-2013 amounted to a total of 10.45 million Euros, of which 7.9 million was international funding coordinated with the International Secretariat and 2.5 million Euros were own contributions by partners including local donors. GFAR and IFAD funding represented approximately 2% of the total. Overall international funding were around 800 thousand Euro per year, confirming the evaluators conclusion that 'the execution of program activities is managed with high regard of cost efficiency and added that 'cost efficiency' has been mentioned as one of its strengths by several stakeholders' (Adams & Fernando, 2009). A steep decline in international funding in 2011 was accompanied by a sharp decline and drying up of own contributions including local donors. Activities have continued after this, but it has been hard to keep the international meetings going and the activities of the international secretariat/support group were sharply decreased. A new and successful fundraising strategy is still to be developed.

#### *Relevance of GFAR support*

GFAR support was very relevant during the initial phases of PROLINNOVA, encouraging, stimulating and connecting the initiators with relevant partners. GFAR seed money and a small IFAD grant were crucial in the inception phase and for raising the profile of PROLINNOVA and creating the momentum for further fundraising, carried out exclusively by the NGOs. During 2004-2010 GFAR provided occasional funding for air travel to international meetings. IN 2011 a Letter of Agreement was signed between GFAR and PROLINNOVA to support NGOs in the international ARD policy dialogue. The initial funding was important as in that same year the financial support from PROLINNOVA's main donor, the Netherlands' Government, came to an end. However, after the first year GFAR wasn't able to continue funding as agreed. Nevertheless, the growing PROLINNOVA network continued to interact with GFAR through its participation in the GFAR governance structure, contributions to GFAR GCARDs, conferences and regional platforms; and the GFAR Secretariat helped set up regional NGO platforms to give NGOs a voice, but found it difficult to integrate its 'own' NGO-led network into these platforms. Finally people associated with PROLINNOVA were active in the GFAR Steering Committee and the GCARD 2 organizing committee.

#### **4.2.6. GCARD – Global Conference for Agricultural Research for Development**

*Strengthening global, regional and national Agro-Food and Nutrition Innovation Systems by strengthening the coherence, collaboration and integration of international agricultural research with that of its multiple global, regional and national research and innovation stakeholders.*

At its establishment, in 1996, the GFAR was charged with strengthening the voice of national research systems in setting and implementing the international agricultural research agenda (Cooke, 2017, p. 48). One principal instrument to achieve greater alignment and collaboration was the GFAR Triennial Conference (Dresden, 2000; Dakar,

2003; New Delhi, 2006). One spin-off from the Dresden meeting was for example, the PROLINNOVA project, implemented by international and local research and innovation actors in over 20 countries. Since its reform of 2008-2009, the CGIAR focused on enabling partnerships with a broader group of development partners, those involved in Agricultural Research for Development (AR4D): “The CGIAR Consortium’s contribution to agricultural development through research and knowledge management must be integrated with the wider development goals and activities of other actors, notably countries, international and regional development organizations, multilateral organizations, advanced research institutes (ARIs), the private sector and organizations such as AGRA”. (AGM 2008, cited in Cooke, 2017, p.48). As a result, GFAR’s mandate was broadened to stimulate participation of a wide range of development partners in dialogues and partnerships with the CGIAR.

### *Collective Action*

Hence, the GCARDs – Global Conferences on Agricultural Research for Development, co-organized by GFAR, in direct partnership with CGIAR and national partners, were designed to serve this broader reflection, integration and alignment. The GCARD was initially planned to showcase the CGIAR and partners’ research and to serve as a marketplace of advances in science for uptake by stakeholders or for further development by the contributors to the CGIAR Fund. The Conference was to provide ‘a platform for interactions among the contributors to the Fund, other donors of restricted funds, the Consortium, partners and other stakeholders, but it had no decision making function’. Indeed some CGIAR observers saw the GCARD as an important part of the accountability mechanism to donors and partners (Cooke, 2017, p. 51). The GFAR Steering Committee, however, took a more comprehensive view, of rethinking, strengthening and transforming the wider agricultural research for development systems around the world, through extensive stakeholder consultation.

### *Outcomes/uptake*

A principal outcome of GCARD 1, co-organized by GFAR with the CGIAR and Agropolis International in Montpellier, 2010, was the GCARD Roadmap. It puts the needs and aims of resource-poor farmers and consumers at the center of the AR4D System and which proposes a series of transformative measures required to enhance the contribution of agricultural research and innovation towards development outcomes. It identifies the stakeholders that need to be mobilized at the national, regional and international levels, as they are the owners of the process of transforming the generation and use of agricultural knowledge and technologies for development. And it turns upside down the approach to innovation from a linear, technological offering-based approach towards a comprehensive, demand-driven approach seeking to deliver the outcomes desired by and for the poor through optimizing the role of knowledge generation, access and use in leading to these. It also redefined the role of GFAR as the open and inclusive multi-stakeholder mechanism for catalyzing these changes (GCARD Roadmap, p. 14). As an input to the conference, moreover GFAR and ILAC (2010) convened a group of global experts and local stakeholders to increase understanding of how to connect research with development through partnerships, defining different types of AR4D partnerships as well as principles of effective partnerships (Cooke, p. 49).

Consecutive evaluations of GCARD indicate that they have indeed functioned as platforms for dialogue and alignment within the global AR4D system. The GCARD

Roadmap, the outcome of GCARD 1, proposes a series of transformative measures: (1) Collective focus on key priorities, (2) True and effective partnership between research and those it serves, (3) increasing investments to meet the huge challenges ahead, (4) enhancing capacities to generate, share and use agricultural knowledge for development, (5) effective linkages that embed research in wider development processes and commitments and (6) better demonstration of impacts and returns from agricultural innovation. With this the roadmap intended to pave the way towards more responsive and relevant agricultural research for development around the world, gaining high profile recognition from the G20 Agricultural Ministers, June 2011. Besides, the CGIAR Strategic Results Framework (SRF) recognized it “has evolved in close interaction with GFAR, as earlier versions were part of regional discussions and the research priorities and approaches were subject to extensive discussion” at GCARD 1.”These discussions have been summarized in the GCARD Road Map for a Transformed global AR4D System and have been fully considered in the development of the SRF”. Hence “the CRPs represent a critical instrument for the implementation of (GCARD) Road Map objectives” (Cooke, 2013, p. 9). In short, GCARD 1 in more than one way informed and inspired the CGIAR’s Strategic Framework, its research priorities and approaches. And GFAR started the debate on what an effective AR4D partnership is.

The joint multi-stakeholder reflection and AR4D agenda setting continued during GCARD 2, in Punta del Este, Uruguay in 2012. Co-organized by GFAR with the CGIAR and the Government of Uruguay, “GCARD 2 intended to take stock of progress made since 2010 in transforming and strengthening AR4D systems around the world. The focus of all sessions was on the practical actions to which interested parties are prepared to commit and their outcomes that can be achieved over the next two years” (Cooke, 2013, p. 11).

Consequently at its inception, GFAR signaled that GCARD 2 set out to move from what transformations are required to how to implement the GCARD Road Map in practice; some 630 participants from 101 countries participated, and another 1,000 people joined on-line. With 220 speakers presenting their work, discussions on 20 themes of global importance were enabled. 20 GFAR-supported pre-conference sessions enabled regional for a and international organizations to discuss their programs in more detail and shape their conference inputs. GCARD 2 also explored the implications of partnership and pathways to impact. It enabled the CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs) at a very early stage to explore their partnerships in open discussions with governmental, non-governmental, civil society and farmer organizations and to link them with the work of others, and national commitments. This led to a range of fifteen new commitments to partnership, capacity development and foresight in the CGIAR (ref. Frank Rijsberman, CGIAR Consortium CEO, in Cooke, 2013, p. 12).<sup>34</sup> In addition, feedback from participants in GCARD 2 made it clear that, besides above institutional outcomes, numerous individual outcomes were achieved, see table 6 below (Cooke, 2017, p.52).

**Box 6: Expected outcomes foreseen from GCARD 2 (2012), from Cooke (2013)**

- Collective actions agreed through a Global Foresight Hub, bringing together many diverse analyses and reviews of future needs to better inform policies and priorities
- The CGIAR SRF Action Plan shaped by public consultations with stakeholders

<sup>34</sup> For a more comprehensive list of CGIAR commitments and GCARD 2 multiple outcomes, see GFAR report: “Delivering the Change together”, also summarized in Cooke’s study of GCARD 1&2.

- Likelihood of successful impacts for smallholders enhanced through agreement on common purposes and mutual commitments to objectives of the CGIAR research programmes (CRPs) and other global partnership programs
- Major new initiatives launched to address capacity needs around the world, increase investment, create more attractive careers and address key barriers to impact from agricultural research and innovation
- Collective actions committed to reshape AR4D systems to better reflect women's perspectives and enable their direct access to innovation products and services
- Demonstrating and renewing commitments to the transformation and strengthening of AR4D systems at national, regional and international levels.

### *Relevance of GFAR contributions*

Cooke's 2013 study also expressed a number of recommendations for the future of GCARD, mostly related to the need to more sharply define the GCARD partnership focus, its interaction with national partners, and an accountability mechanism for the CGIAR SRF and CRP's. The 7 recommendations were reflected upon by the GCARD3 Organising Committee and have led to considerable improvements in the conceptualisation, planning and organisation of the subsequent GCARD3 process and global event. Most notoriously, GCARD3 was designed to include an 18-month run up period including a set of consultations at national, regional level. National dialogues, a pivotal and new addition to the process were organized to trigger greater integration of the CRPs with national programs and greater alignment of CGIAR efforts with national priorities. Each of these components was designed to provide AR4D stakeholders with insights regarding the needs, actions and other stakeholders at each of the national, regional and global levels, preceding the global GCARD 3 event (Cooke, 2017, p. 52-53).

The ALIne (2016) independent assessment of GCARD 3 (2015-16), co-organized by GFAR with the CGIAR and the Government of South Africa, concludes the global conference was a great success on many accounts. Individual outcomes were abundant, as reflected in the table below. However, in the process of sparking institutional outcomes essential improvements must be made. Firstly, the timing of the events running up to the global conference needs to be reviewed. On several occasions it was too rushed, inhibiting proper preparation and integration of consultation inputs. And the timing of the final conference, after all CRPs had already been submitted, reduced the possibilities to provide multi-stakeholder input.

**Table 4: GCARD participant feedback (survey results)**

<b>GCARD 2</b>	<b>GCARD 2</b>
The sessions were useful or very useful to my work	80%
The knowledge acquired is likely to change the design or implementation of our AR4D programs and activities	79%
The partnership sessions were useful or very useful to my work	83%
<b>GCARD 3</b>	<b>GCARD 3</b>
I made connections at the conference with future partners	93%
I wouldn't have made these connections without the conference	81%
I have stayed in touch with these new connections	89%
I came across ideas at the conference that will be useful to my work	90%
I have shared the ideas with others and discussed possibilities for integration	65%
I left the conference with specific actions for myself/my organization	83%
I left the conference feeling (very) positive about their experience	85%

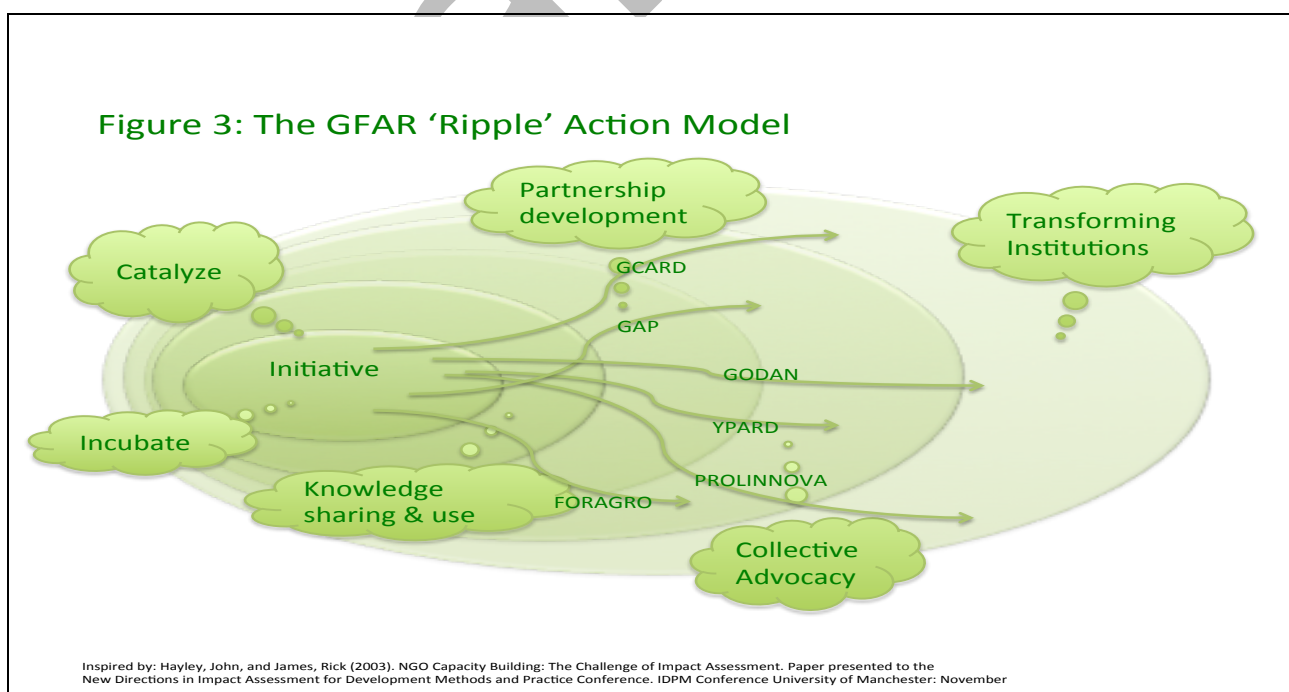
I was satisfied (very/mostly/somewhat) with the clear and specific outcomes of the conference	84%
<i>Adapted from: Cooke (2013) and ALINe (2016)</i>	

Secondly, specific attention needs to be paid to timing and organisation of national dialogues and the innovative site-integration work leading from the country consultations. Considering GCARD's unique contribution to multi-stakeholder engagement in AR4D, the ALINe team points out that the events need to be carefully designed and planned to integrate with national and international AR4D planning processes. Thirdly, thematic coherence at the conference and concrete follow-up were found to be weak: "the post global event together with the consultation process should have led to post-event processes but in the uncertainty as to whom would take these further, they did not materialise fully" (ALINe, 2016, p. 14). Fourthly, the evaluators point at the participation of farmers and farmers' organisations as a critical issue for the success of GCARD, observing their meaningful participation in GCARD 3 was perceived as weak. Finally, the team points at the need to value and use evidence-based analysis to continue learning what works and what doesn't. Certainly a matter of the utmost importance in the rapidly evolving field of intensifying dialogue, networking and collaboration between international agricultural research and its multiple global, regional and national stakeholders.

### 4.3. Understanding the GFAR Approach to catalysing change in Agri-Food Research and Innovation Systems

#### 4.3.1. The GFAR approach to catalysing change

From the case studies it becomes evident GFAR engages in a wide range of collective actions aiming to effectuate change in Agro-Food Research and Innovation systems (ARIS). Figure 3 tries to visualise how this works.



Through its conferences, workshops and other (e-) initiatives, **GFAR creates, or helps to create, opportunities for multi-stakeholder initiatives to emerge**, or alternatively, joins opportunities created by others, where it believes collective action may help trigger AR4D transformation. This way GFAR enables the articulation of action-oriented networks, bringing together the different actors needed to identify, design and take forward a particular collective action. Sometimes GFAR actually provides the breeding ground for multi-stakeholder initiatives to emerge (PROLINNOVA); other times GFAR steps into initiatives by others to be able to advocate ideas and develop collective actions they see as potential contributions to their mission (GODAN, FORAGRO); and most of the time it is not so clear who took the initiative, where besides GFAR other parties are very actively involved from the very start (GCARD, GAP, YPARD). In all cases, GFAR is recognised to have contributed essential pieces to the 'puzzle' of starting up an international multi-stakeholder partnership for impact. And evidently, in the start-up phase, GFAR seeks to respond to demands expressed by multiple stakeholders in a pragmatic way by helping to empower and operationalize the initiative.

Besides, FORAGRO recognizes GFAR support not only for further mobilising its constituencies and providing it with opportunities to engage with others; it also supports information, and its role to facilitate the **sharing and use of knowledge** between its constituents in support of agricultural research and innovation. To promote documentation, sharing and using knowledge seems a primary aim in all (emerging) collective actions as well as the wish to identify and promote improvements to current practice. CIARD-RING (GODAN), Participatory Innovation (PROLINNOVA), publications; webinars to bring partners together in order to share best examples of gender achievements (GAP), to facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge among young professionals (YPARD).

Next, all invest in **developing the multi-stakeholder partnership** needed to sustain the collective action. PROLINNOVA recognizes the relevance of GFAR support in the initial phases, encouraging, stimulating and connecting the initiators with relevant partners, including potential donors as well as the seed money it received to realize the inception phase in three countries.

Finally, in the cases of FORAGRO, GODAN, PROLINNOVA, GAP, GCARD and YPARD the reported efforts also included **collective advocacy** to raise awareness and introduce innovations in agricultural research and innovation policies and institutions. In some cases, it led to observable changes, likely to contribute to **transforming institutions**. For example, introducing youth representations in regional platforms (YPARD), open data commitments from governments (GODAN), country multi-stakeholder innovation platforms (PROLINNOVA) and providing input to the CGIAR Strategic Results Framework and CRPs (GCARD).

#### 4.3.2. Contributing to a wide range of outcomes

The range of outcomes and degree of uptake by relevant individuals and institutions varies a lot from case to case. However all 6 collective actions align with GFAR outcome areas. FORAGRO recognizes the opportunities created for strategic engagement with other regions (S-N, S-S) at the global level, contributing to greater strategic coherence and more transparent stakeholder involvement (Outcome area 6). Besides, GFAR-



supported partnership initiatives in the region contribute to partnerships for impact (Outcome area 2) and integration of agricultural research and knowledge into rural development agendas (Outcome area 5). A remark of colleagues from the Caribbean indicates that this sub-region is not yet fully integrated.

GAP advocates at international events and contributes to GFAR partnerships (publications on Foresight, Research in Development Context (Outcome areas 1, 5, 6). However, the information shared is considered mostly academic; lack integration with practical participatory experiences in the field.

GODAN contributes strongly to partnerships for impact, capacity development and transformational change in agricultural research and innovation systems (Outcome areas 2, 4, 6) through GFAR-inspired advocacy, stimulating international institutions and national governments to pledge to Open-Data, knowledge sharing, technical standards, and farmers' data rights. With support from GFAR YPARD piloted the YAP project (Outcome areas 2, 5). And the GFAR Executive Committee, APAARI and AREANENA included seats for youth; other regions also put youth on their institutional agenda (Outcome area 6, 4).

PROLINNOVA contributed to GFAR Outcome areas 2, 3, 4 and 5, generating increased understanding and further development of approaches and methodologies for promoting Local Innovation (LI) and Participatory Innovation Development (PID); developing and testing modalities for managing a Local Innovation Support Fund (LISF), local capacity building and national and international mainstreaming through supporting the establishment of 21 country platforms. GCARD aligned with GFAR Outcome Area 6, its outcomes contributing to greater coherence and more transparent stakeholder involvement.

### Box 7: GFAR experience (Survey)

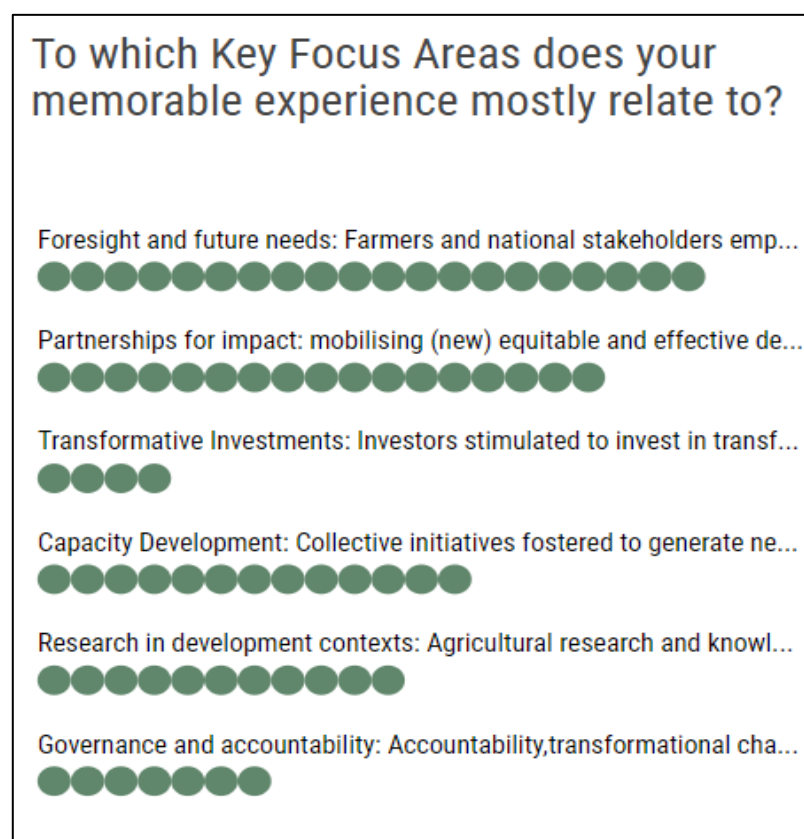
How would you describe your memorable GFAR experience?



#### 4.4. Assessing GFAR-related outcomes: an illustrative sample<sup>35</sup>

##### 4.4.1. Focus on key outcome areas

According to GFAR's theory of change, collective actions, advocacy and sharing of knowledge, catalyzed through the interaction of GFAR partners in open and transparent multi-stakeholder processes, will trigger transformational change in international, regional and national research and innovation systems. Hence, outcomes of GFAR collective actions are contributions to transforming Agro-Food Research and Innovation Systems to become more development-oriented, more effective and more accountable. The combined effect of all these contributions is expected to nudge system transformation forward; no one expects quick-fix solutions here.



**Figure 4: Which GFAR focus areas your experience mostly relates to? (Survey<sup>36</sup>)**

Besides, GFAR focuses its contributions in six key outcome areas (see for a more detailed description, section 3.1, page 9) chosen strategically in line with what the GCARD Road Map defined as requirements for effective AR4D systems. To be sure, such outcomes are almost never the result of the work of GFAR partners and/or secretariat alone; and, given GFAR multi-stakeholder approach, should not be. Also the qualification of an outcome in one of these areas is often debatable as one series of

<sup>35</sup> This chapter is based on a sample of GFAR-related outcomes collected from the interviews and case studies, with complementary information from the survey.

<sup>36</sup> Every dot represents one persons' answer to the survey question. For full texts please refer to section 3.1, page 9.

activities can produce outcomes in different areas. Figure 4 summarizes how survey respondents see the relationship between their GFAR experience with GFAR's key outcome areas.

#### 4.4.2. A diverse sample of GFAR-related outcomes

The review team collected and classified 72 plausible examples of GFAR-related outcomes; these are briefly summarized in Box 8 below, to provide a flavor of the diversity of GFAR-related outcomes recognized by GFAR partners. This list is by no means exhaustive; it does not include *all* collective actions with *all* partners over the past years, nor does it make explicit *all* outcomes from *each* of these. To compile such a list was impossible during the time available for this review. Yet as the list has been compiled from what a diverse sample of GFAR partners perceive as GFAR-related outcomes, it may be considered a credible cross-section of GFAR outcomes over time, adequate to inform this review.

##### **Box 8: An illustrative sample of diverse GFAR-related outcomes**

<b>GFAR partners/networks involved</b>	<b>72 examples of diverse GFAR-related outcomes collected from the interviews</b>
CGIAR (& National governments)	GCARD 1, 2, 3: GCARD Road Map; effective multi-stakeholder mobilization; partnership initiatives; innovative R&I agendas; site integration; learning on how to prepare and facilitate national multi-stakeholder dialogues, site integration and international events
CGIAR-CRPs	CRP Dryland Systems Gender Strategy (GAP), GFAR input into CGIAR reform process, Strategic Results Framework, CRPs, Concept note on Gender and Foresight (GAP)
GAP	GAP network, knowledge sharing and advocacy partnership; webinar Closing the Gender Gap in Agricultural Data; online e-survey, studies on rural women knowledge networks, gender-differentiated needs, transforming R&D methods, advisory services for women, High Level Policy Forum on Agricultural Innovation for Rural Women (GCARD2), Side events at COP 21 and COP 22 on Climate Smart Agriculture and Gender; Newsletter on Gender and Climate Change; input into Rio+20 on gender issues and women farms
Farmers and rural communities	Strengthening farmers' capacity to foresight (Asia, West Africa, Near East North Africa); workshops/training on farmers' rights to seeds (i.e. ASOCUCH, Guatemala); Advocacy and contribution to initiative to develop and International Treaty on Farmers' Data Rights (GODAN); Mediterranean dialogues; bringing farmers into discussion of Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture (GACSA); GFAR has given farmers, women and youth much more a voice in research and innovation planning and partnerships; studies Empowering Smallholder Farmers in Markets and Linking farmers to Markets; World Farmers Organization training; mobilizing farmers to participate in national and regional innovation dialogues.
Youth	Enabling, hosting and supporting YPARD; New forms of engagement: Social reporters at GCARD2, COP 18, and UNFCC Climate Change Conference in Doha; bringing youth into GCARD3 – 428 proposals,

	receiving over 100 K hits; proof of concept Young Agripreneurs Project (YAP) – huge mobilization of GFAR page views, visitors and comments.
GFRAS, Rural Advisory Systems	GFAR was instrumental in the birth of GFRAS, in regional platforms researcher still too dominant; GAP support to strengthening advisory services, introducing a new focus on advisory services for women.
All Regional Fora	Strengthening regional fora, institutionalizing them and mobilizing/enriching their stakeholder constituencies, with farmers', women and youth in particular.
FORAGRO	Enabling strategic engagement with other regional platforms, through GCARDS and otherwise; Letter of Agreement, support to institutionalization, outreach to regional farmers' organizations, youth groups, grass root constituencies; publications sharing the work of national agricultural research institutes with wider audience; Long term support and impact on Sistema Nacional de Innovación Agropecuaria (SNIA), Uruguay.to INIA Uruguay
APAARI	GFAR inspired APAARI to include youth representatives in its Steering Committee
AARINENA	GAP support to 2012 report on Women's Empowerment for Improved Research; Pilot activity with University of Aswan, applying regional priorities and outputs Mediterranean Dialogues in low income communities in Upper Egypt.
FARA	Pan-African Conference on re-establishing research capacity in protracted crisis countries, GFAR provides tools for strong foresight exercises and supports the implementation of Africa 2063 Agenda (Zero Hunger in Africa by 2030); EC Research Grant to scale up African Innovation initiatives, synergies with FARA Innovation Platform study and PROLINNOVA experience.
GODAN	CIARD-RING: GFAR contributing its CIARD-Routemap to Information Nodes and Gateways (RING) to GODAN and engaged in training jointly with others; Strong advocacy for open access and Farmers' data rights.
PROLINNOVA	Global network of 21 Country Platforms for Local Innovation/Participatory Innovation Development; developing and testing approaches and methodologies for implementing Local Innovation Support Funds; multi-stakeholder innovation platforms
GCHERA	Curriculum Reform Agriculture at University level (RUFORUM); GCHERA Conference on "Women's Higher Education"
FAO	AgriFEEDS; GFAR- supported FAO-IFPRI paper on engendering agricultural research; GFAR support to G20 TAP Capacity Initiative, Tap information services, notably TAPipedia, hosted by the GFAR Secretariat; AgriVIVO multi-stakeholder search portal; GAP review of FAO draft State of Food and Agriculture 2013; support and review of links between gender and nutrition for the Committee on Food Security (CFS); GFAR input to Agricultural Chief Scientists, under French, Russian, Turkish and Chinese G20 Presidencies, on improving the coherence and coordination of capacity development for agricultural innovation in the tropics; GFAR contribution to work on International

	Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources (ITPGR).
IFAD	GFAR, a.o. through PROLINNOVA, inspired operationalization of multi-stakeholder innovation funds, now part of IFAD loans for agricultural innovation; GFAR reminded IFAD of the 'Missing Middle', think through investment portfolio to link up with other stakeholders; Empowering Smallholder in Markets; National innovation platforms
GFAR Steering Committee/ governance	35 member SC with regional platforms, strategic partners and 14 different categories of stakeholders; GFAR collective action proposals (14); GFAR/ALINE accountability framework developed, not implemented.
Others	GFAR sponsored Symposium on Maize

#### 4.4.3. The strength of GFAR-related outcomes

In order to determine the strength of the outcomes, the team used the scale presented in chapter 3 (p.8) in which level one indicates an opportunity for multi-stakeholder created and/or seized and level five stands for an actual institutional change induced towards transforming the Agro-Food Research and Innovation system. Table 5 shows how many of the outcomes were judged to achieve which level.

**Table 5: GFAR outcome performance assessment**

	GFAR key outcome areas	Total # of outcomes reviewed	Assessment of outcome performance level					
			Level 1: Opportunity created/seized	Level 2: Engagement achieved	Level 3: Take-aways	Level 4: Joint action enabled	Level 5: Institutional change	
1	Stakeholder empowerment	19	19	19	16	6	2	
2	Partnerships for impact	11	11	10	8	3	2	
3	Transformative investments	3	3	3	3	2	2	
4	New capacity initiatives	12	12	9	8	3	1	
5	Research and knowledge embedded	10	10	10	8	6	5	
6	Strategic coherence/stakeholder involvement	17	17	14	10	3	3	
	<b>Total reviewed</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>15</b>	
		100%	100%	90%	74%	32%	21%	

The strength of the outcomes in terms of contributing to transformational change in Agro-Food Research and Innovation Systems shows variable results. All examples actually represent opportunities used by GFAR for stimulating multi-stakeholder interaction and collaboration. Many, like the GCARDs, GFAR Foresight initiatives or training farmers on Rights to Seeds and so many other conferences and workshops were (co-) organized by GFAR itself; in some others, GFAR seized the opportunity of ongoing dialogues to insert the voice of its constituencies, such as the meetings of the CGIAR Fund Council, the G20 Agricultural Chief Scientists or the Global Alliance of Climate Smart Agriculture. In addition, the information available points at a high rate of satisfaction on the part of those stakeholders taking part in seizing these 'opportunities' (90%) and in about three quarters of the cases specific lessons learned, initiatives or other takeaways were achieved (74%). These figures show that GFAR is very successful in creating and/or seizing opportunities, ensuring active stakeholder participation and stimulate the emergence of multi-stakeholder collaborative initiatives.

However, follow-up on such initiatives appears much lower. According to our sources 33% of the opportunities led to a specific plan for action and 21% contributed to some sort of institutional change; as in the case of GCARD's influence on the CGIAR Strategic

Results Framework and Research Programs; YPARD's moving youth on to global, regional and national agendas, G-FRAS, APAARI and FORAGRO extending and strengthening the mobilization of regional stakeholders, PROLINNOVA contributing to the establishment of 21 Country Platforms and funding mechanisms for stimulating Local Innovation, the IFAD Investment policy that now includes stimulating national innovation platforms, and CIARD-RING that was taken up by GODAN, a G8 Global Open Data initiative. Actually, a success rate of 1 out of 5 doesn't sound out of range for a platform that aims to contribute to institutional change. The realization of institutional change takes time, involves many actors not involved in the networking efforts of the platform, and as such can be seen as a long-term impact outside the span of control of GFAR and its Secretariat. However the downside of it is, as expressed by many of our informants, that if more than half of the takeaways generated during GFAR meetings isn't followed through, frustration grows among the stakeholders who imagined these initiatives and experience that "after all, nothing happens".

#### 4.5. GFAR partner engagement: mobilizing multi-stakeholder action towards a common goal<sup>37</sup>

##### 4.5.1. Partner engagement on outcomes

To catalyze multi-stakeholder collective actions GFAR partners engage in four roles, or main lines of activity: (1) Knowledge sharing and use, (2) Partnership development, (3) Collective Advocacy and (4) Transforming institutions. The review team asked interviewees to indicate which types of activities they engaged in as partners of GFAR. Table 6 below reviews the engagement of GFAR partners with regard to identified outcomes.

**Table 6: GFAR partner engagement per outcome area**

GFAR key outcome areas	Total # of outcomes reviewed	Characterization of GFAR engagement/activities			
		Knowledge sharing & use	Partnership development	Collective advocacy	Transforming institutions
1 Stakeholder empowerment	19	19	14	15	8
2 Partnerships for impact	11	11	10	9	9
3 Transformative investments	3	3	3	3	3
4 New capacity initiatives	12	12	12	9	7
5 Research and knowledge embedded	10	10	7	7	6
6 Strategic coherence/stakeholder involvement	17	17	13	13	9
<b>Total reviewed</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>42</b>
	100%	100%	82%	78%	58%

We found that in practice all collective actions included knowledge sharing between the partners. Sometimes that was all, for example when the outcome was an article or publication. But most of the time partners engaged in partnership development as well, planning and undertaking joint action. Mostly such action included advocacy for mobilizing new stakeholders, bringing specific issues to relevant fora and (inter) national institutions. In more than half of the cases the engagement also included attempts to stimulate institutional change, for example by pushing priority issues onto institutional agendas; including CSOs, farmers' organizations, women and youth in relevant fora, making policy makers aware of opportunities and ways to stimulate multi-stakeholder

<sup>37</sup> This chapter is based on the outcome assessment and information collected during the interviews.

research and innovation to scale, developing and implementing tools for open access to data or, institutionalizing inclusive multi-stakeholder collaboration at national, regional and international levels.

Also from the interviews it became clear that it is difficult to separate these roles; they are closely interrelated. Nevertheless, about half our interviewees emphasize collective advocacy and knowledge sharing as most important. Less than one third points at partnership development and even fewer at institutional transformation. Many doubt whether GFAR can actually do the latter, yet others point out that GFAR has been effectively influencing institutional agendas and the way they collaborate with diverse stakeholders. When asked in which role GFAR has been most effective in their eyes, about half considers GFAR moderately to very effective with regard to collective advocacy, while some 45% feels the same about knowledge sharing. Only 15% feels GFAR is moderately effective in transforming institutions, while some 20% commends GFAR for partnership development. However, opinions vary a lot and, positive impressions meet with very negative ones. One may conclude that - as various sources also indicate - the assessment of the importance and effectiveness of GFAR's roles is very much based on personal experience and influenced by personal expectations and the context in which their individual engagement with GFAR took place.

#### **4.5.2. Partners' role and contributions**

Most partners interviewed indicate they play an active or responsive role in GFAR. 15% plays a leading role as part of the Steering Committee or in a collective action. Another 15% indicate they follow or currently play no role at all. The reasons for being active in GFAR vary from constituency to constituency. GFAR's unique character as a network of networks is highlighted, as is the importance of bringing multiple stakeholders together in dialogue and build trust between them. Farmers and farmers' organizations appreciate the support for advocating their views and learning about issue relevant to them (i.e. farmers rights) and also the support for the local level that GFAR is able to provide. Researchers mostly highlight the opportunities for linking up with other stakeholders and identifying partners, even though some indicate that GFAR's comparative advantage has been declining over the past few years. Others signal the need to insert practical experience (as one interviewee put it: 'a field level dosage of reality') into GFAR.

Regional platforms and continental organizations indicate they can lead GFAR work in their jurisdictions, connect with the countries and their specific needs. They believe GFAR should articulate their priorities with those of other regions, not impose its own priorities. It is observed that there exists no consensus about how to comprehend the role of agricultural research and innovation for development and its application, hence, dialogue and coordination remain vitally important. The development of the regional fora from representing research only, to representing a wide selection of stakeholders, including farmers, women, youth and CSOs, has indeed begun and is signaled as an important improvement. The reformed GFAR Charter is seen as an opportunity to move ahead on truly multi-stakeholder engagement. Some others point out this would require research to play a less dominant role. Representation of SMEs/private sector is less strong.

Partners are aware of what their constituency contributes to GFAR. They all mention connecting their constituencies to the GFAR forum as a main contribution. Besides,

donors mention funding for specific collective actions such as, Foresight, PROLINNOVA or more generally, bringing farmers and farmers' organizations into the debate. Farmers' organizations emphasize linking up local networks and making the voice of (family) farmers heard. One private sector representative contributes to GFAR being on the ground, connecting with the reality of the private sector and interacting with country governments to help create enabling conditions for agricultural innovation. CSO's contribute relevant people to GFAR meetings, network activities and voice of participating stakeholders. One collective action has set up a Google Group on local innovation. Strategic partners highlight in-kind and financial contributions. AIRCA points at bringing in member representation from 43 countries, where their downstream work is closely in tune with country policy. Many partners, however, also hint at the limitations they experience with regard to what they may contribute, see Box 9.

**Box 9: What does it take to be more active? (Wordle image from survey)**



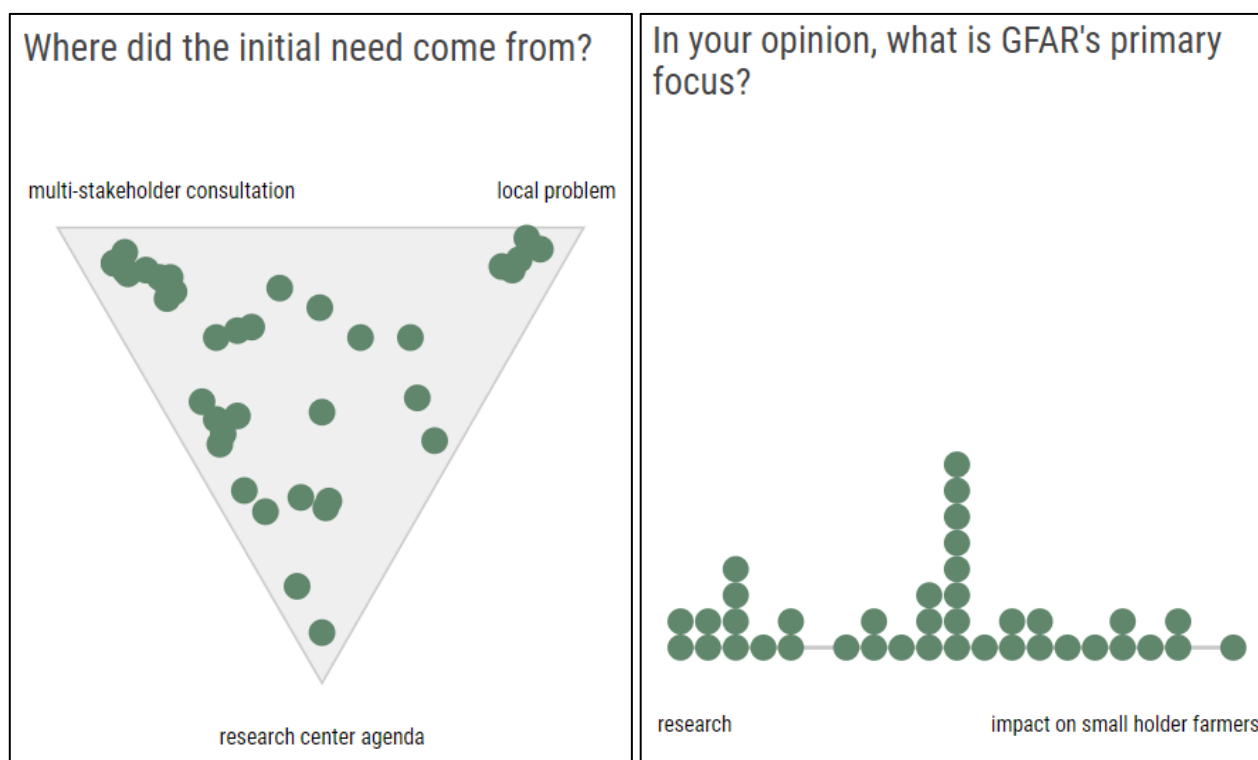
GFRAS brings in more than 1500 members, from 35 countries of which 20 in Africa, organized in 17 regional fora, who finance themselves. The regional fora share GFAR knowledge and provide GFAR access to their constituencies. Research representatives emphasize their role in advocating for quality research on priority issues and contributions to particular collective actions and partnerships, while CGIAR representative underlines providing space to GFAR to participate in for example, the CG Fund Council. NEPAD helps in the definition and identification of the research agenda, particularly directed at climate change and climate smart agriculture.

#### **4.5.3. The orientation and quality of GFAR multi-stakeholder interactions**

GFAR partners who responded to the Sprockler survey paint a balanced picture of how GFAR's priorities are set. Less than half indicates they feel priorities are set top-down by research, most feel it is done bottom-up, derived from local problems and multi-



stakeholder consultation. As for the primary focus of GFAR, a slight dominance of the research field is still felt (Figure 5, in which every dot is a response from a GFAR partner).



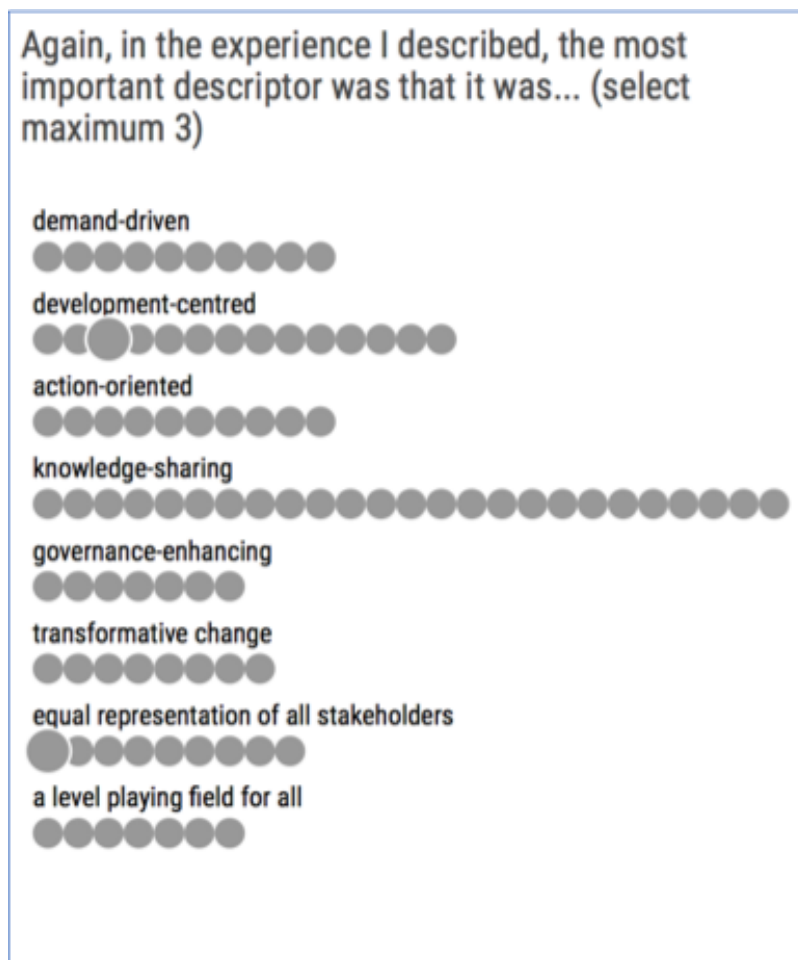
**Figure 5: Initial need and primary focus of GFAR partner experience**

'A level playing field for all' is perhaps one of the most important qualities GFAR expects to achieve. The partners interviewed are divided about this. Half of the respondents recognize GFAR has been successful in creating a level playing field or at least tries it's very best in a very difficult situation. They include CSO representatives, strategic partners, researchers, a private sector representative, a farmer organization and a policy maker. Some underline GFAR has been able to bring the voice of various stakeholders to the table, even reflecting the variety of opinions within particular constituencies. The other half says they feel GFAR has not achieved a level playing field, as research seems to be the dominant player still. These similarly include a range of strategic partners and researchers, a constituency representative and a farmer's organization. Some recognize it is difficult for research not to dominate as the CGIAR is not only huge, but extremely well organized and funded, giving them a decisive voice in whether collective actions are followed through and their results are integrated into their programs. Besides, they observe that researchers are represented in more than one way in the Steering Committee, through the regional platforms and their various constituencies, giving them a louder voice.

Finally, some consider it's hard to break with a mostly research-oriented past, it will take time. Various respondents recognize the new GFAR Charter and Steering Committee are important steps forward, yet they also warn that it is just the beginning of creating a level playing field for all. Perhaps this is where most respondents coincide: creating a level playing field between these different stakeholders is an extremely difficult job. And GFAR

has made good progress – the open atmosphere and engaged dialogues at the GCARDs were also mentioned – but will need to continue to invest in it to make it really happen.

Survey respondents confirm this picture. They describe a close adherence to all quality requirements GFAR sets for multi-stakeholder interactions. Knowledge sharing and development-orientation stand out as achievements, suggesting that with regard to the others there is room for improvement (Figure 6).



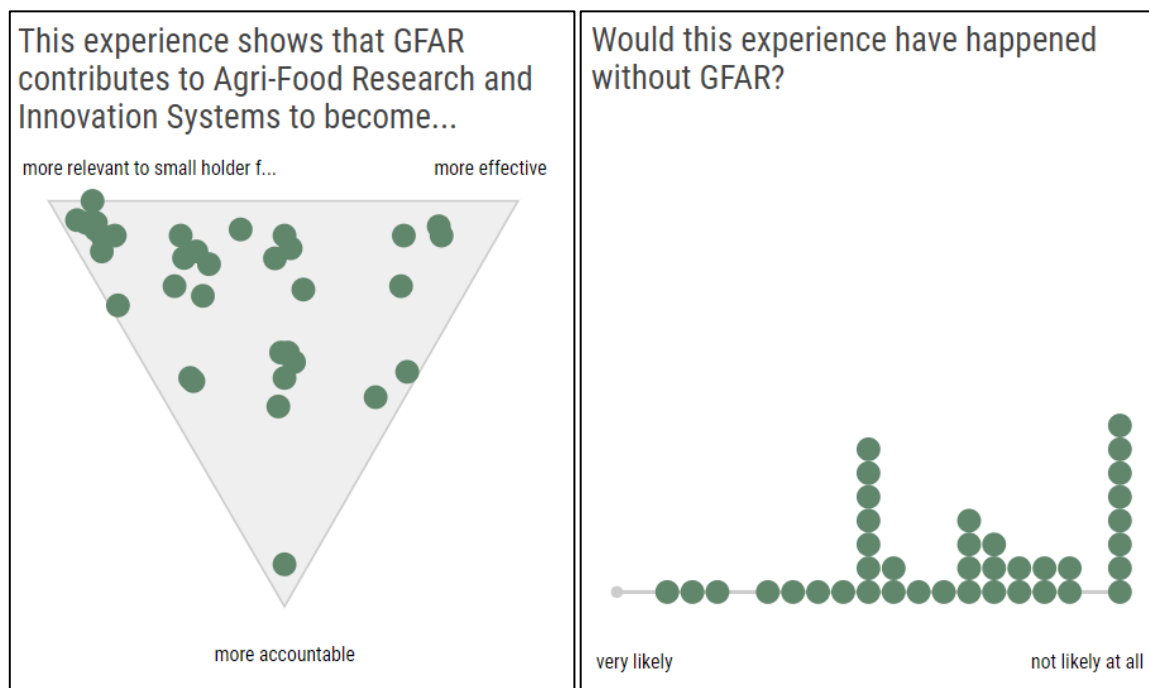
**Figure 6: Adherence to GFAR quality requirements**

Another important quality criterion GFAR applies to multi-stakeholder processes is being 'demand-driven'. The respondents to the Sprockler survey perceive GFAR's agenda to originate from local issues, multi-stakeholder consultations and research center agendas in a balanced way (Figure 7).

#### 4.6. GFAR relevance: catalyzing transformative change in AR4D systems

Catalyzing system change is not a simple one-on-one function. At its best a range of diverse outcomes trigger changes in different corners of the system that build up towards a noticeable, small step towards transformation. Hence, transformative change in AR4D systems represents a huge ambition that can only be achieved through numerous small steps. Besides, innovation systems are systems articulated by people, through active networking and collaboration. The key challenge of GFAR is to help articulate, inspire

and, where possible, support the global, regional and national networks of innovative action-oriented people and institutions that are willing to work towards the transformative change in Agri-Food and Nutrition Research and Innovation Systems; and to assist them in directing such transformative change towards making agricultural research and innovation systems more development-oriented, more effective and more sustainable.



**Figure 7: GFAR contributions to Agri-Food Research and Innovation Systems: would they have happened without GFAR?**

#### 4.6.1. The relevance of GFAR

The review team found that there are many things GFAR partners agree on, such as the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach, including all stakeholders, and farmers, women and youth in particular, a level playing field for stakeholder interaction, a bottom-up, development-oriented approach to setting research and innovation priorities, at the national, regional and global levels. Differences of opinion emerge when one looks how these principles are applied in practice. Who participates actively? Which constituency is organized well enough to be able to present itself at every meeting and, how representative is their presence? Maybe family farmers are present, but are they really able to make their voice heard effectively and are they listened to? Which constituency can make relevant contributions when it comes to a particular debate or collective action? And perhaps a GFAR collective action really produces results that are worthwhile taking up into CGIAR research programs, but are they really taken up or simply filed? And what influence does GFAR advocacy at global high-level meetings have? Or, how level is the playing field when some stakeholders are well funded to do their jobs while others need to take time away from their jobs in order to participate? Or, when some are the ones who decide about financing while others come up with ideas and initiatives without knowing whether they will ever receive the support they need to flourish? From the interviews it becomes clear that GFAR partners have very different answers to such, quite fundamental, questions. Which in itself is a strong argument for the relevance of

creating a space for inspiration, dialogue, consensus building, prioritization and collective action on research and innovation.

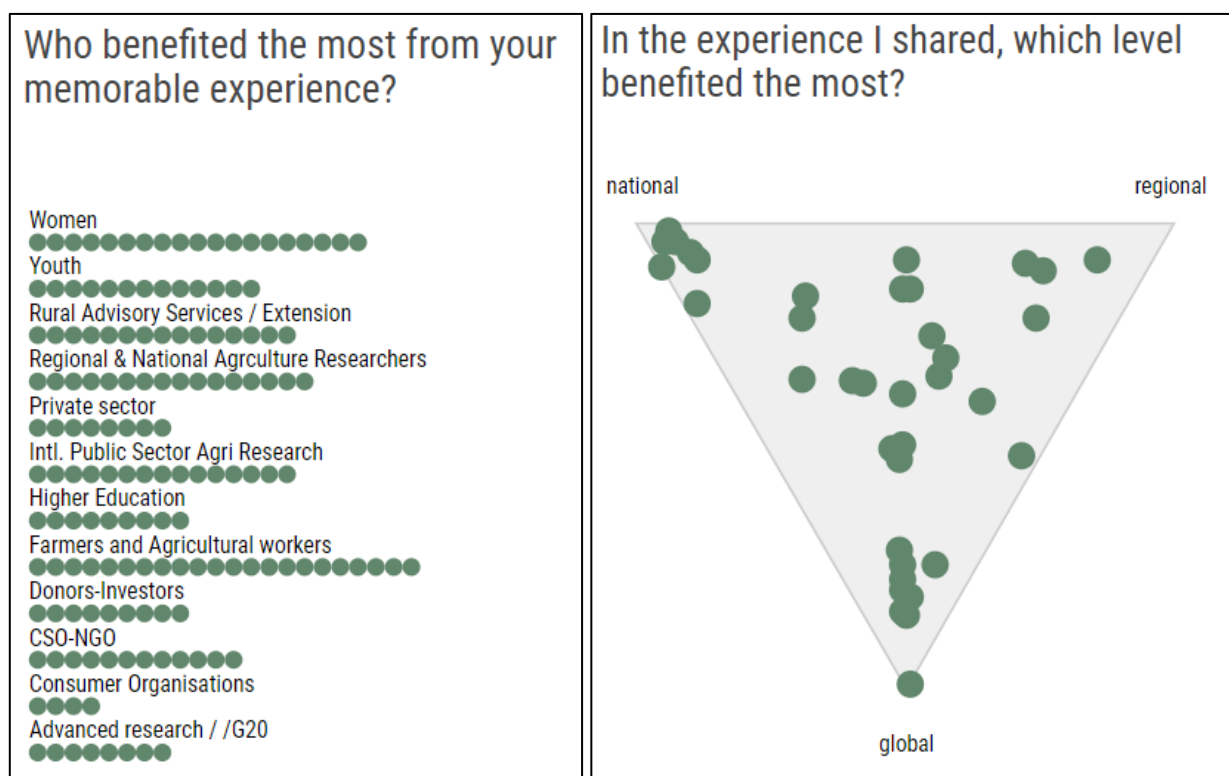
Not surprisingly, 95% of our interviewees insist GFAR is relevant or extremely relevant to their constituency and almost 80% indicates they would create a GFAR if it wouldn't exist. The reasons mentioned include the need to articulate global, regional and national Agro-Food Research and Innovation Systems, in order for stakeholders to join up with research in the global SDG effort to develop agriculture in a more sustainable and inclusive way. And to create a space for a broad range of Agro-Food stakeholders, including farmers, women, youth and consumers, to link up with research (GCARD); to bring the voice of the farmers and farmer organizations and NGOs into international debates and coalitions for agricultural research and innovation, to connect different international research institutions to global development agendas. Also mentioned regularly is the potential of GFAR as a space where new multi-stakeholder research and innovation approaches are developed, new ways of building partnerships and doing action-oriented research and innovation are designed and tested; and for building country collaboration and the alignment of research and innovation agendas with national priorities. Another frequently heard argument is the need to bring together and showcase what research and innovation can mean for development, what impact it has and, may have if driven by multi-stakeholder partnerships. Many stakeholders are not aware of the role Agro-Food research and innovation play in development and many research institutions are considered operating from an 'Ivory Tower'. Hence, the need for 'system transformation', creating new ways for key stakeholders to link up and collaborate in research and innovation to ensure impact regarding sustainable and inclusive development.

The reasons for creating GFAR if it wouldn't exist, are mostly related to the urgency to effectively tackle global challenges, such as the effects of climate change on agriculture and food production and the SDGs; to articulate a common agenda towards sustainable agriculture and to integrate the efforts of different sectors relevant to transforming global, regional and national Agro-Food and Nutrition systems. Most respondents feel such a space is sorely needed. However, they also indicate that GFAR needs to improve its performance, focus on areas where it can add most value and improve the participation of strengthen its constituencies so they can effectively mobilize their networks to effectively participate. Farmers and farmers' organizations, agribusiness and the regional platforms are specifically mentioned in this respect.

#### **4.6.2. GFAR contributions to transforming AR4D systems**

When interviewees were asked more specifically to which elements of AR4D systems GFAR *contributes most effectively*, answers were also quite diverse. Bringing farmers, women and youth into the picture, advocating the role of farmers from developing countries and national agricultural research systems in research agenda setting through GCARD is put forward as a big achievement. Various people suggest GFAR actions mainly seem to happen at the global level. They disagree about whether that is good – as that's where their main added value lies – or too limited – as it means they are not in direct contact with national innovation programs. At the same time, various interviewees suggest GFAR has successfully contributed to changes in the research and innovation chain through the GCARDs, and to changes in the CGIAR in particular. However, others

perceive that some of the GCARDs were very successful but the CGIAR simply didn't 'listen'.



**Figure 8: Which constituency benefitted most? At which level?**

Some interviewees point at the strategic role GFAR plays in connecting the regional platforms with each other at the global level and its potential to foster south-South cooperation. Others point at very concrete verifiable outcomes such as Farmers' Innovation programs in Ethiopia, Nepal and Cambodia, mostly by partners of PROLINNOVA, where GFAR's role in nudging change is recognized. Also GFAR's important mediating role is mentioned, between different perspectives brought in by diverse stakeholders; and its impact on advisory services, offering new knowledge and support materials through GFRAS. Yet others point at the value of consensus building at the top and the articulation of global information and data systems. For others GFAR creates a broader space for dialogue, mutual accountability and collective action to generate public goods. But, they observe, GFAR needs to be clearer on what its added value is and what its outcomes are because so much is done by its constituencies and its collective actions, and no one wants to pay for vaguely defined 'public goods', if at all.

#### 4.7. GFAR governance challenges

This review is not a governance review. However, a number of issues emerged from the interviews that need urgent attention by GFAR governing bodies. Therefore the review team highlights the following challenges.

##### 4.7.1. GFAR has lost profile

Many feel GFAR has lost profile over the past years. GFAR forums, GCARDs in particular, are considered the “best” of GFAR since they have become a venue that provides networking and matchmaking opportunities. GFAR’s contributions to creating a common space for stakeholders to interact and, to promoting multi-stakeholder research partnerships in CG Reform have been appreciated. Yet partners hear inspirational words but are unaware of any outcomes beyond their very personal experience. As one interviewee put it: *GFAR seems to mostly arrange meetings, the networking is great, but what does it lead to? Networking can’t be a goal in itself.* Other interviewees express the feeling GFAR lost sight of its mission; that it is “all-over-the-place”. Still others ask themselves: Is GFAR still a global forum for *research*? The review didn’t find reason to confirm either opinion, on the contrary, a thorough look at GFAR-related outcomes and their strength confirms GFAR’s mission as a global multi-stakeholder networking player aiming to trigger transformational change in Agri-food Research and Innovation Systems. But it also confirms GFAR-related outcomes are very diverse and geographically scattered and, not systematically known by its partners.

In addition, too often GFAR raises expectations it isn’t able to follow through. Several interviewees mention having developed a joint action proposal during a GFAR-organized meeting or workshop that never received any follow up. Others told the team how difficult it turned out to be to ensure financial and technical support for their partnership initiative to be implemented, even if supported by a GFAR champion. The review team’s assessment of the strength of GFAR-related outcomes points into the same direction: 32% of the outcomes generated leads to enabling joint action. While this may generally be seen as a good result, the downside is that a majority of those actively engaged did not see their initiative followed through. Add this to the others who experienced strong limitations with regard to the GFAR support for implementing their initiative, and it shouldn’t be a surprise to find lack of clarity and contradictory opinions about outcomes, added value and comparative advantage of GFAR and the activities it embraces.

#### **4.7.2. GFAR implementation lacks focus, method and consistency.**

While the GCARD Road Map describes the challenges GFAR wants to address relatively well, the GFAR ‘catalyst approach’ isn’t clear to most. Informants see mostly events and funding as instruments GFAR uses. And wonder whether it is “all talk”. They are also unclear about whether GFAR is a multi-stakeholder forum that helps set the research agendas to increase research impact on development objectives or, a body that implements donor projects. Others remark GFAR seems to be chasing too many projects, engaging in what is seen as an ad-hoc manner; a clear strategy and criteria for engagement is lacking. Hence, they perceive GFAR energy and resources to be spread thinly. Some partners highlight GFAR’s recent choice to focus on ‘collective actions’ may help strengthen strategic focus; even if, at the time of the interview, they haven’t heard back from GFAR which proposals are going to be implemented and how.

Furthermore, partners do not see a clear GFAR strategy for advocacy. Certainly, they recognise that advocacy for GFAR objectives at the global level is done by GFAR Secretariat itself, with the help of some partners. Some constituencies also recognise GFAR provides them with means and opportunities to advocate their case. However, GFAR does not seem to leverage its unique position with FAO and CRPs to link up with national policy makers, who could be key drivers in many of the initiatives it fosters.

Although since 2015 a specific country focus approach has been developed with the CGIAR and GFAR, with its multi-stakeholder networks, is now involved in the joint programme developing between FAO, CGIAR and IFAD, in general the review found limited evidence of the specific ways or tools GFAR employs to support advocacy efforts.

The lack of a clear strategy, methods and tools points at a lack of process-orientation and management on the part of GFAR. It gives both partners and collaborators the impression that decisions are not taken strategically but in a very ad-hoc, sometimes even arbitrary manner. This is particularly damaging where scaling up the benefits from collective actions is concerned. Capitalising upon successful collective actions needs continuous monitoring, follow up and support for scaling up results. The PROLINNOVA experience presents a case in point. However most of the partners in this programme learned from their action-research at the national level in 21 countries - in terms of developing instruments and tools for effectively supporting local innovation - the scaling up now seems to be coming to a halt as both CRP interest and donor funding for the international components of the programme have halted.

#### 4.7.3. Representation

The research and innovation context has changed since GFAR was established, partly because of its own success. Many Agri-food research groups now work in multi-stakeholder partnerships to develop their research and innovation programmes. However, the representation of non-research stakeholders in these partnerships is still fragile. This is because on the one hand, research funders generally do not cover the costs and other financial constraints that keep innovation actors from participating, and on the other, not all constituencies are equally well organized to be able to participate fully. Where this is the case, GFAR's added value lies not in promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships per se but in helping to improve the quality of the partnership (i.e. inclusiveness, demand-drive, level playing field, sustainability); to help strengthen the voice of these new partners, particularly smallholders, women and youth, and to document and share results with other partnerships and stakeholder constituencies. The new Charter and the establishment of the new Steering Committee in which all constituencies are represented is an important step towards a more tailor-made and context-sensitive approach to support stakeholder constituencies in their research and innovation dialogues and collective actions at different levels.

#### 4.7.4. Funding

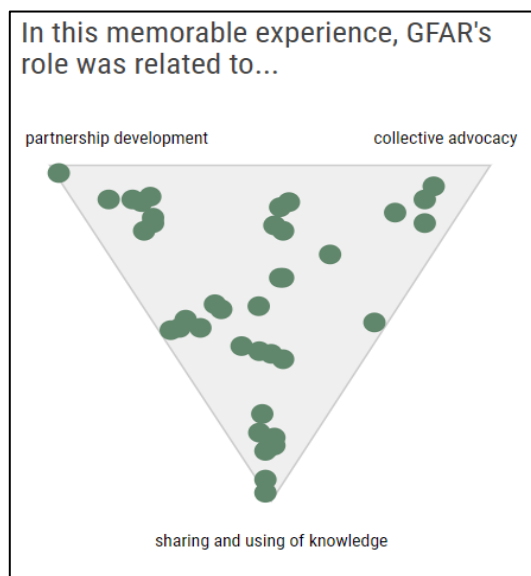
Donors, and other strategic partners, do not seem to fund the GFAR Mission and Strategy, rather they tend to fund (partly in-kind) particular projects or pilots of their interest – GCARD, Linking up farmers and farmers' organizations, Foresight, Transformative Investment, etc. At the same time, collective actions inspired by GFAR partners themselves experience great difficulty in securing adequate donor support to implement their programmes. Besides, donors seem hardly interested in securing long-term funding for GFAR's core platform and network building activities: extending and maintaining the global agri-food research and innovation networks and partnerships; mobilising and diversifying its constituencies, incubating and following-up on collective actions initiated by its partners at various levels, and monitoring and communicating results from collective actions in terms of system transformation.

GFAR tries to accommodate diverse interests but so far seems incapable of aligning different strands of activities into a coherent, synergetic package. As a result, GFAR wastes considerable time chasing for funding, while it doesn't have sufficient staff or funds to follow through on most joint actions GFAR inspires, giving rise to frustration among its membership and staff. Clearly, for donors to be strategic partners, they need to address the financing of the Forum's core activities and, be willing to invest in the implementation of collective actions formulated by GFAR partners aimed at transforming a particular.

## 4.8. GFAR Secretariat, management and organization

### 4.8.1. Overall management

Within the priorities set by the EXCO and Steering Committee, the Secretariat needs to manage its work, to prioritize, plan, implement, monitor and learn from its activities in the various priority areas. Given the size and complexity of GFAR's network of networks, the Secretariat can't do everything and needs to choose its 'battles' carefully and strategically. Which again begs the question of what are the priorities behind GFAR support for collective actions and also how are they determined.



**Figure 9: In my experience, GFAR's role was related to...**

We asked partners we personally interviewed which of the main roles or lines of activity they think the GFAR Secretariat prioritizes most. Almost two-third points at *advocacy* and around 45% *knowledge sharing and use* and *partnership development*. *Transforming institutions* is last (35%). However, more than 60% of our respondents indicate 2 or more areas being prioritized and almost 30% points at all four. Comments range from “*they don't prioritize and they should*”, “*GFAR works in all four, and don't see how they can prioritize*”. “*They should focus more*” was an often-heard statement. However, this cannot be easily interpreted to mean that more focus can be achieved by reducing the types of activity that are supported. Figure 9 summarizes the responses of the survey to the question to which GFAR role their experience was related. It shows that these members have been involved in a wide spectrum of GFAR activities and that often their experience is related to more than one line of activity. It also confirms that these different



lines of activity are closely intertwined and, success in any particular case may be related more to their combined effect rather than an exclusive focus on one of them. The call for focus, in the view of the review team, should rather be understood as a call for closer, better-understood and more visible linkages between the different lines of activity and the intended outcomes and impact envisaged.

The review team noticed a strong need for improved operational management at the GFAR Secretariat, symptoms including overstretched staff; lack of joint work planning, last minute obligations, ad-hoc decision-making and, micro management, to mention some issues. In this sense, realistically, how many relationships can one person inspire, how many Collective Actions can one person enable, working in the excessively formal and bureaucratic environment created by the FAO *modus operandi*, seriously limiting staff in their possibilities to act in a pro-active, flexible manner. Furthermore, in line with GFAR's project status within FAO, most staff is on part-time and/or temporary contracts, regularly facing job insecurity. In a complex uncharted area of work that requires teamwork, mutual support and a steep professional learning curve, such uncertainty negatively affects joint knowledge and expertise building, transparency and favours short-term thinking and obstacles to creating a team culture.

The review sees a link with another issue frequently brought to our attention: *the lack of follow-up to ideas, plans and proposals for collective action from partners* that emerge from events (co-) organized by GFAR, such as GCARDs, regional workshops or Steering Committee meetings (cf. 4.5.1). In order to increase GFAR's span of control its Secretariat clearly needs to be adequately organized, equipped and resourced.

#### 4.8.2. Secretariat roles/lines of activity

*To articulate action-oriented networks GFAR needs to engage people first* (par 4.2.). It can do so directly, by calling for people to become members of the global platform, or indirectly, contributing to its constituencies strengthening their organization and mobilizing their constituencies and networks to engage in GFAR-related activities, as it did for most collective actions we were able to review, most recently, for example with FORAGRO and WFO.

**Table 7: Actual GFAR roles/lines of activity**

<b>Lines of activity GFAR engages in:</b>		<b>Catalyzing role GFAR Secretariat:</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Creating opportunities for multi-stakeholder networking and matchmaking</b>	<b>Preparing, (co-) organising, moderating and following-up on (e-) networking events</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Using and sharing knowledge</b>	<b>Enhancing Knowledge and Information Management</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Partnership Development</b>	<b>Facilitating effective partnership development</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Collective advocacy</b>	<b>Enabling collective advocacy</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Transforming institutions</b>	<b>Stimulating organisational/institutional change</b>

The most important instrument for triggering such engagement is *(co-) organizing and/or stimulating partners to participate in conferences, workshop or other multi-stakeholder encounters, either person-to-person or online*, where multiple stakeholders can discuss and prioritize issues from the GFAR agenda and generate and develop ideas on how to tackle these in practice. Characteristic examples of GFAR activities in this field are the GCARDs, the Youth Social Reporters' initiatives. From the case studies we have seen

that such multi-stakeholder opportunities for generating ideas, relationships, dialogue, prioritization and action planning form the backbone of GFAR's networking. This is a large chunk of the Secretariat's work to help its partners to create, (co-) organize, moderate and, last but not least, follow-up on such meetings. In Table 7 we therefore amend Table 1, chapter 3, which spells out the roles of the Secretariat in each line of activity; adding creating and (co-) organizing networking events as another line of work in which the Secretariat plays a crucially supportive role.

*However, as one interviewee observed, networking for the sake of networking is not what its members expect from GFAR.* For each (e-) meeting or conference it has to be clear what it leads to. The relation between networking opportunities created and/or seized and GFAR outcome areas must be clearly spelled out as well as, what follow up can be expected along the four main lines of activity GFAR has defined: (1) to enhance knowledge sharing and use, (2) to facilitate partnership development, (3) to enable collective advocacy and (4) to stimulate organizational and institutional change.

#### 4.8.3. Instruments to support collective actions

The *instruments the Secretariat wields to support collective actions* may be grouped as follows:

- (1) Strategic support, helping to create opportunities, advocate and providing policy and institutional backing to multi-stakeholder initiatives so these can acquire greater visibility and rise as a policy priority with relevant institutions.
- (2) Communication, data and information support,
- (3) Budgetary support (either in-kind, i.e. secondment of staff, hosting, or financial contribution)
- (4) Logistical/organizational support for training, developing training materials and organizing and moderating workshops,
- (5) Methodological support in organizing multi-stakeholder collective actions and moderating events.

The survey provides us with a view of partner priorities regarding the GFAR support they consider most effective in their work with smallholder farmers (Figure 10). A differentiated approach is clearly necessary to address the needs of the various regions.

From the case studies it is clear that partners consider **strategic support** by GFAR extremely valuable. FORAGRO mentions the opportunities it got through GFAR to attend conferences and meetings to advocate, contribute to and link up with global priorities as well as to engage with other regional fora, inspiring South-South cooperation. GODAN benefitted a lot from GFAR's commitment and contribution to advocating for farmers' data rights and building collaboration between institutions. GFAR's advocacy and support to include youth in its Steering Committee and to raise awareness of the importance of youth in the AR4D agenda to all stakeholders was explicitly mentioned by YPARD. FORAGRO mentions substantive guidance to institutionalise, mobilise and extend its constituencies; it also benefitted from policy and institutional support for organizing its 1<sup>st</sup> Charter Meeting in August 2017. GAP on the other hand considered strategic and financial support was lacking and, its high-level gender expertise, covering all geographic areas and networks, could have been used more effectively. PROLINNOVA considered GFAR support during its initial phases as very relevant, opening doors and connecting

the initiators with relevant partners. Last but not least, GFAR strategic action through GCARD created space and opportunities for the CGIAR and its research groups to connect with different stakeholders, including farmers and farmer organisations, civil society, women and youth.

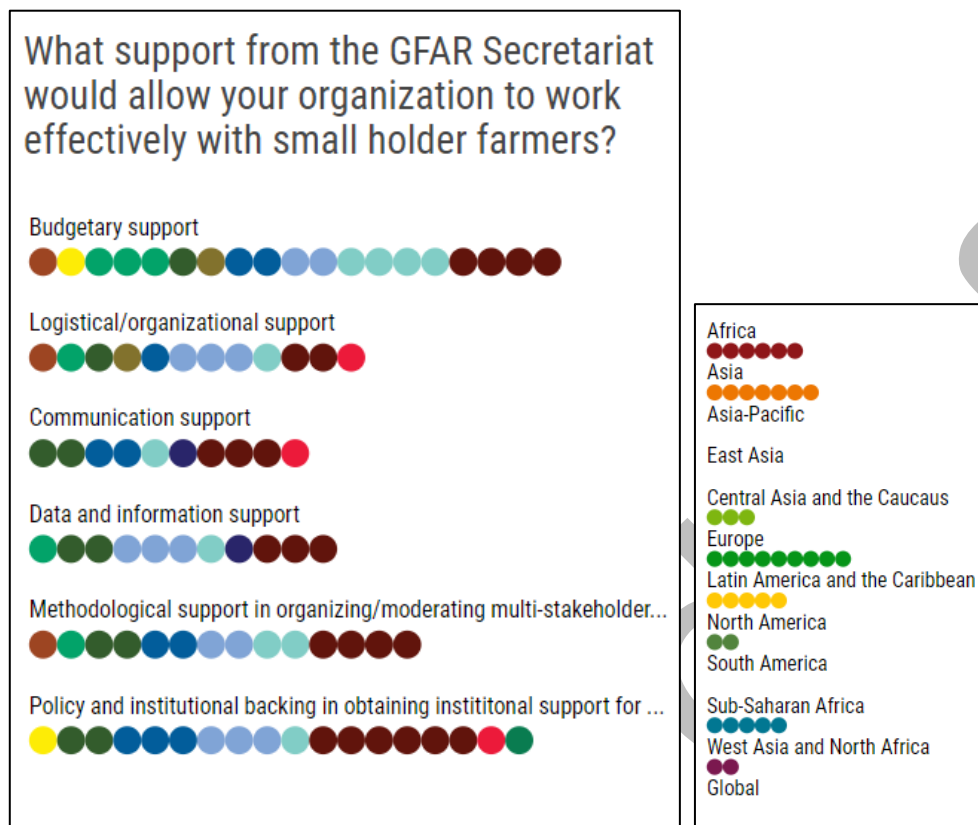


Figure 10: What support from the GFAR Secretariat allowed your organization to work effectively with smallholder farmers? (No disaggregated data available on Asia-Pacific, East Asia and South America).

A type of strategic support often mentioned in the interviews includes GFAR’s support for stakeholders to attend live meetings and conferences relevant to them. Bringing (international, national, local) CSOs, Farmers’ organizations, Women and Youth to be present to have their voices heard and network at levels and with people they could never have access to in person otherwise. Many interviewees expressed being grateful to have attended such events. Systematically collecting their stories would be a great opportunity for reporting back and state what they intend to do as a result of attending the meeting.

Besides, all partners involved in the collective actions mentioned **communication, data and information support** by GFAR. Obviously, the CIARD-RING contribution to GODAN Open Data is a straightforward example; also GFAR contributed to 4 GODAN publications. GFAR also helped others to produce documents and publish articles, such as GAP and YPARD. PROLINNOVA was invited regularly to present its work at international conferences and workshops GFAR (co-) organized. The GCARD Road Map was a strong contribution to integrating and building coherence across institutions in the field of Agro-Food research and innovation. Strategic engagement, knowledge and

information sharing within and across GFAR regions and constituencies were supported. However, partners also expressed many concerns in this area. In many instances it was mentioned GFAR did not manage to provide adequate follow up to initiatives it helped incubate. Lack of Spanish translation limits the use and usefulness of GFAR texts in Latin America. Communication across different collective actions was often missing. GFAR didn't systematically monitor, highlight and share its successes or failures for partners to be able to appreciate progress and learn from.

**Budgetary support** generally covers a very small part of the total turnover of the collective actions. However, it is considered of great strategic importance, providing finance for activities that would otherwise would not have been possible. It is directed more towards providing essential inputs (small grant to start a pilot (PROLINNOVA), 0.3 full-time equivalent of staff time to help institutionalise the platform (FORAGRO), 0.50 FTE to support advocacy, integrate and further develop CIARD-RING in the case of GODAN. In fact, GFAR funding amounted to no more than 1% of the total international project costs of PROLINNOVA over ten years (2003-2013). The bulk (87%) of PROLINNOVA's funding came from the Dutch government, Rockefeller foundation and Misereor. Similarly, GFAR's contribution to GODAN, while considered crucially important, amounts to about 3% of GODAN's estimated annual budget. Similarly, GFAR budgetary support to GAP amounted to 0.15 FTE and office space. In the case of YPARD, relatively young and hosted at GFAR, the percentage of its budget covered by GFAR may be somewhat higher. Budgetary support of GFAR to GFRAS, the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services is known to cover about 7% of its annual budget in 2015. These data suggest that GFAR collective actions can only be successfully implemented when a strong leverage on funds from other donors is achieved.

Where **workshops and training** were mentioned, GFAR input was generally appreciated, particularly regarding new themes such as foresight, and open data in agriculture. One GFAR-related outcome was the GODAN Working Group on Data Rights and Responsible Data. The importance of GFAR *methodological support for organizing multi-stakeholder collective actions and moderating events* was mentioned by FORAGRO (workshops/Charter meeting), YPARD (YAP), and GODAN (8 working groups). The GCARD case confirms this, but the evaluations also give rise to various suggestions to improve it.

#### **Box 10: Some concerns raised regarding GFAR support**

The case studies point out various ways in which GFAR support can be improved. However, the case studies also showed considerable concerns with the partners about the limitations applied to GFAR support, budgetary, strategic and organisational and technical/methodological. Several informants mention the need for a stronger strategic focus on the part of GFAR in their support for collective actions. Others question the strategy and criteria that guide the decisions on the amount of budgetary support and its continuity and the insecurities built in due to temporary contracts of GFAR staff. Yet others ask themselves why strong support and strategic guidance from GFAR, also about fundraising, was discontinued while the collective action as such was very successful.

#### **4.8.4. Communication**

Box 11: Since 2015 GFAR's web presence and activities have grown

GFAR website average monthly page views increased to 16,000 compared to 10,000 in 2015. The GFAR blog now has 7,000-10,000 page views per month (1,100 in 2015) and 5,000-7,000 visitors per month (600 in 2015) with 20-40 comments posted/month (5/month in 2015). The GFAR update monthly newsletter is sent direct to over 12,000 subscribers and via LinkedIn to a further 8,000. GFAR Facebook followers are now over 17,000 per month, with average monthly views of updates by over 20,000 people per month. GFAR has 17,000 followers on Twitter and the Executive Secretary's LinkedIn group now reaches over 8,000 followers, with each GFAR news item typically being noted as read by around 1,000 professionals.

Source: GFAR Secretariat, 2017

While the numbers given in Box 10 show GFAR is making progress, this review found the communication strategy behind it rather weak. With exception of the Social Reporting and YAP campaigns, it does not seem to take full advantage of free on-line communication options. Current pilots with e-groups and webinars need to be evaluated as interviewees signalled many limitations in regards to their participation: Google Groups are not widely appreciated for collaborative work and Blues Jeans technology is not stable, something the review team itself also experienced. Lack of timely response to their communications is often signalled as a problem by interviewees; they send in a proposal or request and do not receive a reply in a timely manner. Sometimes it appears related to lack of familiarity of Secretariat staff with the topic or limited access to personnel with expertise in that particular area.

While the topics of most webinars presented are interesting, in most occasions GFAR is felt to be "broadcasting" the information only. Several interviewees commented that GFAR does not offer a value added to their webinars if they only "spread the word". In such cases they feel GFAR should not be presented as one of the organizers, but as a resource, as two-way communication should be the norm. It is clear that many partners would like to experience GFAR as a hub to add value, linking up requests from one end of the globe to providers of knowledge, information on the other.

Other frequent observations allude to the fact that GFAR activities are so diverse and so scattered that it becomes difficult to keep track of them. Internal communication - that is within the GFAR network - is often cited as a limiting factor for effectively focusing one's contribution and the sharing of ideas, knowledge and information. Communication technologies used for e-groups and e-conferencing are not as accessible and operational as they should be to many partners. Another issue reducing active participation is language. Partners often experience the language as confusing, while the terminology keeps changing. Moreover, lack of access to materials in Spanish and French has been reported as a serious drawback, preventing wider mobilisation and participation from stakeholders in Latina America and the Caribbean as well as West Africa. This may be a problem in other regions as well.

#### **4.8.5. Monitoring, sharing experience and learning**

During the interviews the Review team asked interviewees whether GFAR-related outcomes were monitored, documented and shared with them. Again, the answers were split in half. About 50% said *they were indeed kept informed*, referring to the web site, the

monthly update and annual glossies as the sources of the information they received. One respondent indicates GFAR maintains a good communication through networks, reports and blogs, mostly online. Another receives information regularly but feels texts are too long and difficult to digest. Yet another receives reports but doesn't read them, failing to see their relevance to his own work. Some respondents go a little further in their analysis and indicate that while the flow of information is all right, outcomes are not monitored **as GFAR lacks a framework to be able to do this.**

The other 50% of our respondents consider that GFAR *does not* monitor, document and share its outcomes. Some are simply not aware. Many others state that GFAR doesn't systematically monitor and report on outcomes. They see GFAR reporting as more activity and output focused. One interviewee wanted to see more outcomes in order to be able to answer the question: What is GFAR delivering concretely? Another confirmed that a framework for monitoring outcomes had once been developed in consultation with the partners, but had never been implemented. The review team found reporting of GFAR-related outcomes only in the two most recent reports to the European Commission. The apparent lack of systematic reporting and sharing of information on GFAR-related outcomes might well be one reason why partners are so divided in their opinions regarding GFAR's performance in different focus areas.

In conclusion, GFAR knows no systematic measurement and reporting on outcomes/impact. An outcome-reporting framework was developed, but was stopped short of testing and implementation, apparently because FAO legal procedures prevented its inclusion in the Letters of Agreement (LOAs). While external communication with partners on GFAR activities and outcomes seems limited to the Website and Newsletter, and, according to one interviewee: "once in a while an email".<sup>38</sup>

This is the more surprising, as the field 'Catalysing transformation in Agro-Food Research and Innovation Systems for Development' is not a thoroughly professionalized or even well understood field of work. Rather, *GFAR is a trailblazing initiative*: It enters uncharted professional territories most of the time. And it has numerous partners who do so as well. Yet the review found relatively little attention to capitalising on experience in order to improve what GFAR is doing and how they do it. Various partners, e.g. FARA, PROLINNOVA, CGIAR, and others, did document their approaches and methodologies, and GFAR staff has done some of it. Yet the little attention paid to link up partners, institutionalise joint learning and professionalise the support to collective actions contrasts sharply with the enormous variety of outcomes GFAR has helped inspire. At the same time, one must observe that many of GFAR's staff is part-time and on temporary contracts, which generally stands in the way of adequate (action-) research and fast on-the-job-learning. A GFAR 'Academy' cannot be built on short-term staff and project interests.

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<sup>38</sup> Underscoring the importance of further strengthening GFAR's global communication strategy and its implementation (see 4.8.4. Box 11)

## 5. Conclusions

### 5.1. How does GFAR contribute to accelerating change in Agri-Food Research and Innovation Systems?<sup>39</sup>

The review team takes an Agri-food Research and Innovation System (ARIS) to be a system that enables relevant stakeholders to work together to identify, explore, research, develop, pilot and bring to scale ideas, practices and/or technologies that contribute to transforming Agri-Food and Nutrition Systems. In the case of GFAR the transformation sought is defined by the UN Agenda 2030. Therefore, GFAR collective actions are expected to advance ideas, practices and technologies that contribute to the technological, social, economical and/or policy innovation necessary for Agri-Food and Nutrition Systems to become more inclusive and more sustainable (cf. 2.1).

Over the years, GFAR and its partners have taken up a variety of collective actions. They have worked to include Farmers Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, Regional Agricultural Research Forums, Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services, International Public Sector Research Organizations, Higher Education, Private Sector, International Agencies, Advanced Research and recently, Consumers in multi-stakeholder initiatives, with particular attention to smallholder farmers, women and youth, and their organizations, as partners and provided them with opportunities for networking, advocacy and cooperation in the numerable activities it (co-)organized. Where possible it actively supported the self-organization and or institutionalisation of these constituencies (i.e. Foresight, GFRAS, YPARD, GAP, Letters of Agreement with Regional Forums). At the same time many partners point at severe limitations. To name just a few: Does the CGIAR, Development Banks, Facilitating Agencies and Donors, really listen and take up the lessons learned from GFAR collective actions, such as GAP and PROLINNOVA? Are farmers' sufficiently present in various platforms to make their voice heard, and are they really listened to? Do international agendas still have a disproportionate influence on the rural and agricultural research agendas or are these now more closely linked to national and local development contexts and needs? Clearly, GFAR and its partners have contributed to the Agri-food Research and Innovation system becoming more inclusive than it was before, at the global and regional level, but also in a number of countries where specific collective actions (Country Platforms, Innovation Platforms, Local Innovation Support Funds, Foresight, etc.) or IFAD's enhanced investment portfolio were implemented. Yet, as one of the interviewees remarked, 'this is only the beginning'. To achieve a truly global articulation of networks and dialogues, the representation of each of these stakeholder groups, or constituencies, needs to be improved upon, they need to continue to organize themselves in order to articulate their voices at various levels, and fresh opportunities for interaction and communication need to be created to extend geographic coverage. This concerns smallholder farmers, women and youth in particular.

Apart from its contributions to the inclusiveness of Agri-Food Research and Innovation System, the review identified a range of diverse GFAR-related outcomes that contribute to change in different corners of the ARIS. Numerous examples of joint initiatives by GFAR partners have been identified in each of its chosen outcome areas, ranging from

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<sup>39</sup> Answers review questions 1a and 1b.

co-organizing global conferences and meetings to organizing multi-stakeholder innovation platforms and innovation support funds at country level; from strengthening the voice of hitherto unheard stakeholders to building multi-stakeholder partnerships; from articles and books to developing an agricultural research and innovation agenda, and from advocating changes in the institutional policies to developing and proposing methodologies suitable to trigger institutional change. This review shows that 74% of these outcomes produced concrete results participants considered applying to their own work or their organization, 32% enabled joint action while 21% actually contributed to institutional change in a component of an Agri-Food Research and Innovation System (section 4.3.3). Also, further scrutiny of the outcomes in the different outcome areas shows that GFAR-related outcomes are mostly directed at catalysing social, financial, economical and, institutional and policy innovation, aiming at creating enabling conditions for multi-stakeholder partnerships to bring technological innovation to scale. This confirms its orientation towards transformative change and the complementarity and added value of GFAR collective actions to mainstream AR4D activities.

The team concludes GFAR indeed catalysed a wide range of outcomes that contribute to transformative change in Agri-food Research and Innovation Systems. Outcomes were identified in each of the GFAR key outcome areas, agreed during GCARD 1 as most promising for accelerating transformative change. Assuming this GCARD vision holds true, a widespread contribution from GFAR and its partners to Agricultural Research and Innovation Systems becoming more development-oriented, more effective and more sustainable, seems plausible<sup>40</sup>.

## 5.2. How relevant are GFAR-related contributions within the national, regional and global contexts of change in Agricultural Research and Innovation Systems?

GFAR-related outcomes are generated from collective actions by partners in GFAR, with direct or indirect support from GFAR or, in some cases, just inspired by active participation in a meeting, workshop or conference GFAR (co-) organised. GFAR's catalysing role means that local, national, regional and/or global actors identify issues relevant to their own context and practice and design collective actions to address them. Where this design and its implementation adheres to the GFAR process quality requirements, such collective actions are demand-driven, development- and action-oriented and characterized by equal representation of all relevant stakeholders and a level playing field for all. However, GFAR's contribution is not only creating conditions for multi-stakeholder partnerships to emerge. Its other pillar is its focus on outcome areas, which help trigger the social; economic, financial, institutional, and policy innovations needed for the global Agro-Food and Nutrition System to become more inclusive and more sustainable. As we have seen, this way GFAR provides a much-needed global complement to the many efforts being made in the world today that focus on driving technological innovation. This is the message the review team received over and over again from the large majority of GFAR partners who insist, if GFAR wouldn't exist they would create it.

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<sup>40</sup> Impact evaluation was beyond the scope of this review. The identification of level 4 and level 5 outcomes (4.3) however demonstrates a strong potential for impact on relevant parts of the ARIS.



In conclusion, this review finds that GFAR contributions to transforming the Agri-Food Research and Innovation System (ARIS) are twofold: The first originate from its drive to make the ARIS more development-oriented and more inclusive; the second from its efforts to catalyse change at different levels to transform the ARIS into an enabling environment for scaling up innovation. Within the context of an Agri-food research and innovation landscape that faces huge challenges to respond to the needs of rural communities, smallholder farmers, women and youth, as well as huge limitations with regard to scaling up innovation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, GFAR's contributions acquire extreme relevance.

### 5.3. GFAR strategy, management and organization

Notwithstanding its many contributions to Agri-Food Research and Innovation System transformation and its relevance to the world's advance towards achieving the UN 2030 Agenda, many are concerned about GFAR: it appears to have lost focus and to be spreading its limited resources too thinly; too many initiatives by its partners do not receive the follow up and support required, and GFAR is too dependent on short-term, project-oriented funding. In such conditions, the question is: can GFAR do enough, and effectively enough, to assist the world in achieving the sustainable development goals by 2030? And, given the many challenges the Agri-Food Research and Innovation System faces in different geographic regions and at different levels are so diverse, can GFAR find a way to effectively address them all?

As most partners, the review considers the new Charter, the Steering Committee with broad multi-stakeholder representation from global, regional and local levels and, the choice of collective actions as *modus operandi* for GFAR as very promising. It is clear from the review itself that 'collective action' is a suitable way to define what GFAR partners are expected to do: resolve 'collective action problems', making sure relevant stakeholders are enabled to orient, develop and act, to bring innovation to scale; something that is not likely to happen unless individual actions are joined. Additionally, the review has observed that quality criteria for qualifying a programme as a GFAR collective action have been developed by the Steering Committee. This will enable GFAR to support those collective actions from which it expects most return in terms of transformative change.

However, GFAR needs an actionable strategy, a strategy that specifies in much more detail what specific changes it aims to contribute to, and how such a contribution will be catalysed. GFAR's theory of change lacks specificity and will have to be developed to support focus and operational decision-making. This requires a much sharper definition of the contribution of GFAR to expected outcomes and impact on Agri-food Research and Innovation Systems; and a monitoring system that collects key information on actions and results on a regular basis, for reporting, communication and learning purposes.

Also GFAR's instruments for supporting collective actions so far lack strategic orientation and specification. Partners perceive support and decisions taken as rather arbitrary and not always founded in a professional course of action. The strategy behind these as well

as the response to the specific needs and contexts of different partners or collective actions is often not evident. They do realize that the funding situation of GFAR is rather variable and unpredictable and GFAR needs to balance its budget. Adjusting what can be done to the human and financial resources available is a permanent challenge for GFAR. Generally speaking, the opportunities for GFAR to play its complementary role are infinite, but it can't do everything; hence, it needs to focus strategically on those collective actions it expects most leverage and impact from. As a result, full transparency in decision-making about what actions are supported, why and how is a requirement to manage expectations and/or frustration on the part of the partner involved in collective actions. Partners need to understand why particular collective actions did not receive follow up on the part of GFAR and why, in the case of long-term successful collective actions they are 'abandoned' without a thorough analysis of the 'GFAR-dividend' they are bringing and can still bring.

In short, for GFAR to realize its potential, the GFAR and its Secretariat face strategy and management challenges, in particular related to transparency, accountability, communication and learning. In a partner-driven organization, partners and staff should be able to see how the strategy, work plans and ad-hoc initiatives, stem from strategic decision-making and shared leadership. This supports a continued investment in levelling the playing field for all, effectively addressing existing asymmetries between constituencies in driving the global research and innovation agenda. Besides (strategic) partners and staff need to learn when and where their (collective) actions were most influential and created the most leverage for transformative change; not only from their own experience but from what is experienced by the many others (countries, regions, international organizations) involved as well. In addition, these achievements need to be shared with the wider public. Finally, as GFAR is an organization that oftentimes enters in uncharted territory, it should develop a systematic way of on-the-job learning: defining learning trajectories; use innovative, creative and non-conventional ways of documenting, sharing and learning, including multi-media, interactive and popular on-line platforms that stimulate on-going active engagement. And in this process link up and collaborate closely with partners as well as outsiders who are entering into these uncharted territories as well. Drawing lessons from experience with highly successful collective actions, such as PROLINNOVA, GODAN, Social Reporting and YAP projects would be a good first step.

Finally, facilitating agencies and strategic partners play a dominant role in GFAR, as is the CGIAR. Not so much by dominating discussions – although this sometimes happens as well. It is mostly by influencing operational decisions through their choice to support (in the case of donors) or take up (in the case of the CGIAR) certain GFAR-inspired actions, and not others, in a situation where external funding is scarce and GFAR-opportunities are manifold. While this may be the natural way of things, it does raise the question: are donors willing to invest in GFAR and, in the collective actions GFAR inspires? Or do they prefer to follow their own agenda and 'cherry-pick' from the menu of collective actions GFAR provides, to strengthen those actions they consider may contribute most to their current policy objectives?

For GFAR to live up to its potential, facilitating agencies need to pledge long-term support to GFAR's mission and operations. They need to provide GFAR with a flexible operating space so it can manage its programmes and support its partners to effect. As

for GFAR's strategic partners, they need to be aware that two distinct lines of financial support are required. First and foremost, financial support for its basic platform functions, such as the Steering Committee and Secretariat's catalysing role, creating opportunities for multi-stakeholder networking and matchmaking, supporting and capitalising on collective actions, including where necessary, support to strengthening the organizations representing the GFAR constituencies. Secondly, ways will have to be found to secure additional financing and context-specific technical support to strategic collective actions GFAR partners implement, so these can be brought to scale and capitalized on nationally and internationally. Hopefully, ways can be found to avoid it taking two years of courting donors to acquire external funds, or stopping external funding before the collective action has actually been able to reach its full international potential, as in one case we studied. The support required may differ in each case, but given that each GFAR collective action is expected to scale up innovation, foster institutional change and link up with international networking and learning, local partners cannot be expected to shoulder all costs.

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## 6. Recommendations

The review has shown that GFAR, as a global networking organization, is doing what it is supposed to do, catalyzing transformative change in diverse corners of the global Agri-Food Research and Innovation System. A review of 72 illustrative examples of outcomes from GFAR actions showed a 32% success rate in terms of enabling joint action and 21% in terms of institutional change. GFAR therefore has a critical contribution to make towards achieving the goals of the UN 2030 Agenda. However, the review also found that over the past years, GFAR's outcomes were spread too thinly; are often not recognized as such and GFAR has not been able to adequately follow up on many initiatives from its partners. As a result, GFAR has lost profile and direction, reducing the effectiveness of its actions. At the same time, GFAR adopted a new Charter, has strengthened the representation of multiple stakeholders in its governance; establishing a Steering Committee in which a wide range of research and innovation stakeholders is represented, including farmers, women and youth, at different levels. The review also confirmed that GFAR's choice to focus on 'collective actions' as the modus operandi for GFAR partners to catalyze transformative change provides an opportunity to sharpen its profile and professionalize its work streams. GFAR may be expected to build on its strengths and do even better.

The review therefore makes the following recommendations:

1. ***Continue to empower GFAR's constituencies, smallholder farmers, women and youth in particular:***
  - a. Consult and consider which constituency requires which type of support to be able to fully mobilize and express itself.
  - b. Ensure each one of GFAR's constituencies is able to fully participate in national, regional and international research and innovation platforms relevant to them and, in GFAR-related collective actions.
  - c. Weigh, and where necessary compensate for, existing asymmetries between actors from different constituencies, through the support it provides to collective actions.
2. ***Improve the capitalization of, and learning from results of the collective actions it supports or has supported:***
  - a. Strategically identify a number of on-going collective actions for joint reflection, learning and capitalizing on results in terms of contributing to transformative change in Agricultural Research and Innovation Systems.
  - b. Organize knowledge hubs in key focus areas, documenting, connecting and reflecting upon the experiences and outcomes gained by partners through collective action, starting with those identified under (a.).
  - c. Organize a continuous joint reflection to develop an in-depth understanding of how best to organize, support and implement collective actions for transforming Agricultural Research and Innovation Systems within a particular context.
  - d. Support partners in bringing their lessons learned to bear on national, regional and global Agri-food research and innovation policies and practices.

3. **Develop a more explicit GFAR strategy with a focus recognizable to all:**
  - a. Align GFAR's strategy and profile relevant SDG's and other things 'people care about' (i.e. 'Leave no one behind').
  - b. Specify in much clearer terms GFAR's intended outcomes and impact; define indicators and methods for harvesting results.
  - c. Review and narrow down key focus areas to those areas where GFAR's added value and leverage can be expected to be greatest.
  - d. Further specify GFAR's theory of change, or impact pathway and make it specific enough to guide strategic decision-making and to provide a basis for transparency, accountability and learning from experience.
  - e. Concentrate on GFAR's role as an enabler, providing its members with opportunities to advocate, dialogue and realize collective actions.
  
4. **Make better use of your partners:**
  - a. Strengthen GFAR's presence in the regions and consider decentralizing part of the activities to regional fora or local partners coordinating collective actions, where these can demonstrate comparative advantage.
  - b. Support partners in mobilizing resources for the collective actions they undertake at the local, national and regional level, recognizing that without national and other non-GFAR resources the impact of its collective actions is going to be more limited.
  - c. Engage partners more actively into advocacy at the global level, for example, by stimulating all its partners to pledge to open-data and to start taking steps towards opening their own data.
  - d. Fully implement GFAR's new charter with subcommittees to engage the Steering Committee in collective action advocacy.
  - e. Consider translating essential publications to be able to reach out to non-English speaking audiences of smallholders, women and youth in particular.
  
5. **Improve operational management:**
  - a. Appoint an operations manager at the GFAR Secretariat who can establish an effective shared leadership culture.
  - b. Consider innovative ways of organizing GFAR collective actions and Secretariat as teams of self-driven professionals operating and situated across the globe.
  - c. Provide reasonable job security and a flexible work environment to GFAR staff, for them to be able to maximize on-the-job learning and knowledge networking, in order to professionalize their work streams.
  - d. Develop a transparent modus operandi to support partners in identifying and/or developing collective action proposals, as well as clear criteria for choosing which initiatives to support towards implementation, including quality and exit criteria and, criteria with regard to expected transformative impact.
  - e. Develop an information/communication system to allow for systematic follow up on partner initiatives and to provide regular feedback and information on strategic choices made, to the partners and wider membership.

- f. Develop a monitoring system for regularly harvesting information on achieved outcomes and potential impact.
- g. Improve internal and external communication, to improve responsiveness and to strengthen GFAR's profile and recognition among partners, members and the wider public; making more strategic use of the array of electronic applications currently available at the Internet.

**8. *Develop a professional learning culture:***

- a. Organize a GFAR 'academy', integrating the various methodological (2.b.) and thematic (6.c.) knowledge hubs to build a professional understanding of what it means to assemble, design, organize and support collective actions aiming to 'catalyze Agri-Food Research and Innovation System transformation'.
- b. Professionalize GFAR's approach to supporting collective actions along the five lines of activity identified: (1) creating opportunities for network articulation and matchmaking; (2) knowledge and information sharing and use; (3) partnership development, (4) collective advocacy and, (5) transforming institutions. The review mission found these to be complementary and they can potentially reinforce each other.
- c. Facilitate the emergence of knowledge hubs in key thematic areas where GFAR and its partners have achieved significant progress, such as Foresight; Promoting/Financing Local Innovation, Gender and Agri-Food Systems, Partnerships for Impact, preferably by encouraging and supporting partners to become such a hub.

**9. *Inform and engage facilitating agencies and strategic partners on what it brings and what it takes 'to catalyze transformative change in Agri-Food Research and Innovation Systems':***

- a. Inform and agree on achievements so far and define joint ambitions with regard to GFAR's contributions to transformative change in Agri-Food Research and Innovation systems in line with the UN 2030 Agenda.
- b. Agree on longer-term financial and in-kind support for GFAR core activities: creating networking opportunities, enabling knowledge and learning networks and hubs, partnerships for impact, collective advocacy, and institutional transformation, and to follow up and support collective actions.
- c. Agree on the number of full-time staff equivalents/experts and the financial resources needed for GFAR and the GFAR Secretariat expand its span of action in accordance with the level and quality of outcomes and potential for impact expected.
- d. Agree to create opportunities for GFAR-related collective actions to attract financial support directly from donors, in addition to GFAR seed money, setting clear entrance and exit criteria in line with ambitions agreed upon.

## 7. Annexes

### Annex 1: List of acronyms

AARINENA	Association of Agricultural Research Institutes in the Near East and North Africa
AGM	Annual General Meeting
APAARI	Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutes
AR4D	Agricultural Research for Development
AIRCA	Association of International Research and Development Centers for Agriculture
ARC	Agricultural Research Council
ARIs	Advanced Research Institutes
ARIS	Agri-food Research and Innovation System
CACAARI	Central Asia and Caucasus Association of Agricultural Research Institutions
CFS	Global Committee on Food Security
CG	(formerly) Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)
CTA	Center for Technical Agriculture
CIARD	Coherence in Information for Agricultural Research for Development
CPs	Country Platforms
CRP	CG Consortium Research Program
EFARD	European Forum for Agricultural Research for Development
EIARD	<i>European Initiative for Agricultural Research for Development</i>
EMBRAPA	Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
FORAGRO	Forum for the Americas on Agricultural Research and Technology Development
GAP	Gender in Agriculture Partnership
GCARD	Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development
GFAR	Global Forum on Agri-Food Research and Innovation
GFRAS	Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services
GDPRD	Global Donor Platform for Rural Development
GCHERA	Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for Agricultural and Life Sciences
GCWA	Global Conference on Women in Agriculture
GODAN	Global Open-Data for Agriculture and Nutrition
GPP	Global Partnership Program
ICAR	Indian Council of Agricultural Research
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILAC	<i>Institutional Learning and Change Initiative</i>
IPW	International Partners Workshop
ISNAR	International Service for National Agricultural Research (A CGIAR Center, no longer existing).

IST	International Support Team
ITPGRFA	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
LI	Local Innovation
LoA	Letter of Agreement
MTP	MTP Mid-Term Plan
NARS	National Agricultural Research System
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PID	Participatory Innovation Development
PROLINNOVA	Promoting Local Innovation in ecologically oriented agriculture and natural resource management
RING	Routemap to Information Nodes and Gateways
SC	Steering Committee
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
UNRISD	UN Research Institute for Social Development
WFP	World Food Program
YAP	Young AgriPreneurs Project
YPARD	Young Professionals for Agricultural Development



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